Commentary

Volume Fifty-six, Number Two, August 1973

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Aaron Wildavsky

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Cynthia Ozick

George Lichtheim, 1912-1973
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Modern Jews and Their History
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Books in Review
David Ernest Haight/James R. Adams/Louis Berg/Alan L. Mintz/Jeffrey Marsh

An Exchange on Black Progress:
Ben J. Wattenberg and Richard M. Scammon & Critics

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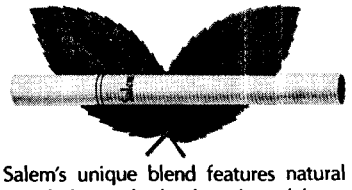

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Letters from Readers

On the Nature of Black Progress

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The question of whether or not most blacks are in the middle class is purely definitional. Ben J. Wattenberg and Richard M. Scammon ["Black Progress and Liberal Rhetoric," April] have used such a wide-open definition that the only people who would not be included are professionals (who constitute only about one out of every eight of the black working population) and the unemployed. But the strongest argument against Messrs. Wattenberg and Scammon lies in the untampered facts on the distribution of families by income-size class as published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census:

FAMILY INCOMES AND EARNINGS, 1971

Race	*Median Income*	*Percent of families with incomes*	
		Under $5,000	*$15,000 or more*
White	$10,672	16.2	26.4
Spanish	7,548	30.4	10.3
Black	6,440	38.6	10.6

What emerges without stretching the facts is that in a society which preaches egalitarianism, incomes are grossly unequally distributed along lines which are fundamentally racial. And this is what the struggle is all about: although significant progress has been made, there is much left to justify discontent.

Both the authors, as did Daniel P. Moynihan before them, place considerable weight on the evidence that black families with male heads who are under thirty-five years of age and who reside outside the South have achieved income parity with comparable white families. Both they and Moynihan argue that this parity is evidence of progress and augurs well for the future. But this income gain is deceptive. As the authors recognize, the two groups lack full comparability on a very crucial point: young black wives outside the South are more likely to be working year-'round than young white wives. Hence, a considerable amount of the "equality" in family income is based upon the inequality in work effort.

. . . Second, black husband-wife families outside the South in which the male is under thirty-five years of age account for only 16 per cent of black husband-wife families throughout the country, and only 10 per cent of *all* black families—the other 90 per cent continue to be unequal. As a matter of fact, black families as a rule have found that the absolute gap between their incomes and white family incomes *increased* from roughly $2,500 in 1947 to just over $4,000 in 1971.

Messrs. Wattenberg and Scammon state that when only men under thirty-five who reside with their wives outside the South are compared, the parity ratio is maintained. But these men account for less than 10 per cent (roughly 7 per cent) of all black men. Again parity affects relatively few blacks.

Moreover, there are reasons for being doubtful that even this will be maintained. Studies by economists have suggested that one of the main reasons for black income gains has been the migration of young blacks from the rural South to the North where wages are higher. There appears, however, to be little hope of further major gains from such migration since the black population of the rural South is now only 3.9 million.

While blacks were leaving the South at a rate of 10.6 per cent, the economic growth and income of that area was increasing faster than any other part of the country, and young whites were returning to the South at a rate of nearly 10 per cent to capture these new opportunities. One possible effect of this migration might be to increase the income gap between blacks and whites in the future if the industries to which whites are moving in the South continue to grow faster than the ones blacks are entering in the North. Unless blacks are able to take advantage of the economic growth in the South this situation could be exacerbated.

Another major factor in improving black earnings in the 60's was the high level of demand for labor during that period. Economists have argued that economic growth . . . was the most important factor in increasing the relative wages of black men in the 60's and they have also found that when the . . .

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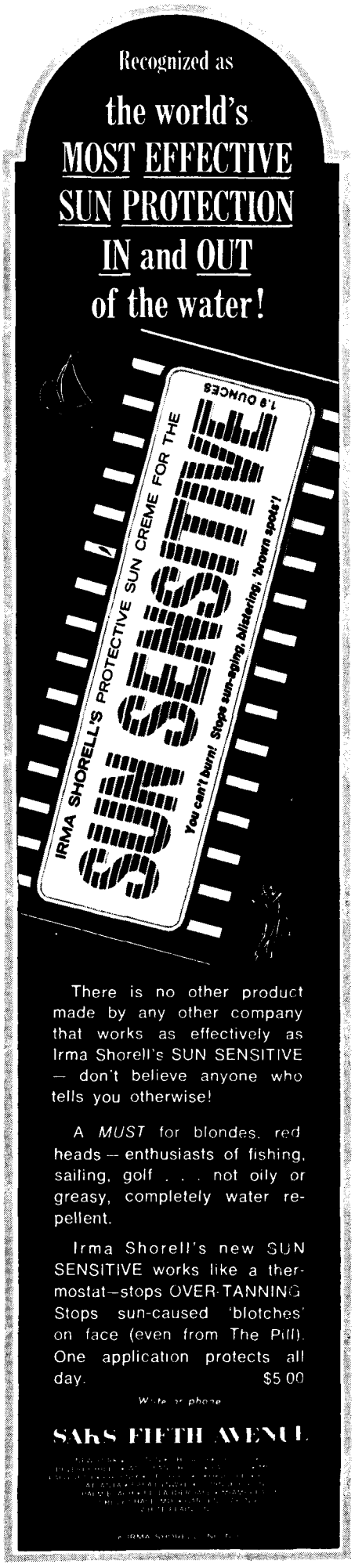
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aggregate unemployment rate rises above, say, 3.5 per cent, black family earnings are seriously threatened. The unemployment rate now hovers around 5 per cent, and to make matters worse, there is currently a tacit assumption that we must be prepared to accept this statistic as normal because of changes in the composition of the labor force. . . .

A foundation for the belief that the income gap will increase lies in educational attainment. While blacks have made great strides in education, some basic truths remain: among people under thirty-five, the college completion rate is four times higher for white males than it is for black males; it is twice as high for white females as it is for black females. The rate of high-school completion is 50 per cent higher for young white men than it is for blacks. These figures say that while blacks are busy in the labor market, whites are investing in themselves. Since the return on investment is always expressed in higher lifetime earnings, the parity which is currently observed . . . could disappear over the lifetime of this generation, for it has also been shown that the rate of return on education and experience is significantly higher for whites than for blacks. In addition, the children of this age group will not necessarily grow up equal. Otis Duncan, in a very careful and well-done study of the ability of parents to transmit income status to their children, shows that blacks are less likely to be able to do so than whites. In fact, the Duncan findings hold that while blacks may transmit occupational status as easily as whites, their children are less likely than white children to be able to convert this occupational status into income.

Historically, the black unemployment rate has been twice as high as the white unemployment rate. Messrs. Wattenberg and Scammon take comfort in the fact that the historical 2 to 1 black-white unemployment ratio has apparently been broken. Economists noted, however, that 1970 was an unusual recession year; those industries from which blacks were traditionally excluded were struck hardest. Moreover, 1970 represents a period when black men were leaving the labor force at a faster rate than white; hence, they were less likely to be counted as unemployed. The fact is that in 1972, the black-white unemployment rates returned to their 2 to 1 ratio. In 1973 the unemployment rate for blacks is 10.2 per cent, and this does not include those who have left the labor force. Furthermore, there are those (the subemployed) who are working part-time although they would prefer full-time work, and those who are working at substandard wages. The unemployment rate for whites is 5.2 per cent —again the rates are 2 to 1.

It is not satisfactory for Messrs. Wattenberg and Scammon to show an improvement in the relative unemployment rate of black and white men with wives present. . . . Similarly, the high unemployment rate (over 35 per cent) for black teen-agers cannot be dismissed lightly (in many black families this spells the difference between being in poverty and not; it also engenders criminal behavior and disproportionately high armed-services enlistment rates among black youths).

The authors also note that blacks have made remarkable strides into white-collar occupations. It is true that the black rate of upward mobility outstripped the white rate, but it should be noted that the greatest difference was in the rate of entry into clerical occupations—hardly the objective of most upwardly-mobile whites. . . . Blacks remain significantly underrepresented in high-wage occupations. In 1972 there were 35 per cent fewer blacks in professional occupations than would have been the case had blacks had as equal an opportunity as whites to enter. The underrepresentation in managerial occupations and in sales is nearly 70 per cent, in crafts it is about 30 per cent, and in clerical work about 21 per cent (all these figures are based on calculations using data in the President's Manpower Report).

The authors take as a mark of progress the fact that 12 per cent of all union members are black; they conclude from this statistic that blacks are more likely than whites to be union members. But this is meaningless. Blacks are concentrated in blue-collar work and are therefore more likely than whites to be in jobs subject to unionization. Moreover, blacks have long been able to get into unions—particularly industrial and segregated locals. Indeed, industrial unions were always less discriminatory than craft unions. It is entry into non-segregated craft

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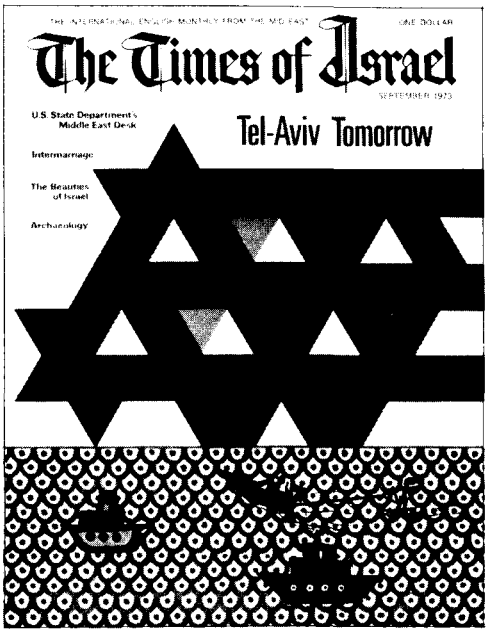

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unions which has been the black objective. And this is the rub. Craft unions control entry as well as employment in high-wage blue-collar occupations. Blacks constitute only 5 per cent of workers in craft unions.

The authors take refuge in the statistic that 13 per cent of apprentices in the construction trades are black. Even this is not an unambiguous achievement. Apprenticeship programs are only the first hurdle in gaining full membership. And even after full membership is achieved (a process that can take years) blacks will have to confront another problem—a fair shake in referrals to jobs. Hence, the ultimate test is not apprenticeship, but the percentage of all union work hours going to blacks.

I do not wish to be cynical, but one of the items of "progress" Messrs. Wattenberg and Scammon did not note is the catching up of white women professionals and managers with their black female counterparts. The median level of education of black females in these occupational categories in 1960 was 15.6 years and for whites it was 14.0. In 1972 the black figure was 16.0 and the white 15.3. This does not mean that black women are better educated than white women. It means that educated white women were more likely to be out of the labor market. Given women's liberation, we will in all likelihood see a reversal of this ratio.

The article did not compare housing. It is important to note that the percentage of housing with inadequate plumbing occupied by blacks remained constant between 1960 and 1970—nearly 30 per cent.

Figures on vital statistics released by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare show that, if anything, the difference in life expectancy between blacks and whites in the prime age group (twenty-five to fifty-five) remained the same or increased only slightly during the decade. For example, a twenty-five-year-old black is expected to live six years less than a white of the same age. The difference in 1960 was 5.2 years. On this, the authors are silent. They are also silent on the remaining gap between blacks and whites in infant and maternal mortality. Indeed, both black and white rates fell sharply after World War I, but black maternal mortality has remained about three times the white rate and black infant mortality after the first twenty-eight days also remained roughly three times the white rate. The infant mortality rate for blacks during the first twenty-eight days is still a shocking 23 per 1,000 live births.

Messrs. Wattenberg and Scammon do note a sharp increase in black families on welfare; they imply that this is partly due to the sharp rise in female-headed households. . . . More critically, however, the increase is due to high rates of unemployment (note the sharp rise especially between 1969 and 1970 during the economic downturn), the high rates of withdrawal of discouraged adult black males from the labor force during that period—a trend which warrants national concern—the demise of unconstitutional and inhumane welfare laws, and the vigorous attempt of public-interest groups to get eligible individuals on the welfare rolls.

Finally, the authors claim that blacks are more satisfied than whites, and it is true that some statistics support this point. But a major index of social dissatisfaction is suicide . . . and the black suicide rate among fifteen-to-twenty-four-year-olds doubled between 1960 and 1969; among black females in this age group it went up nearly three times. . . .

At the end of their article, Messrs. Wattenberg and Scammon argue that liberals and civil-rights leaders have contributed to the demise of social programs by remaining mute—if indeed they have. There is a subtle dilemma here: to say the programs were unsuccessful is to invite their demise, but to exaggerate their success, as the authors have done, is also to invite the same adverse result. The fact is that the death knell of social programs will come as a result of the coming to power of a conservative philosophy which fundamentally opposes the programs as well as from many quantitative evaluations which have simply ignored some of the lasting benefits of these programs. One of these is the contribution of Community Action Programs to the participation of blacks in the legitimate public arena. This is not to deny, on the other hand, that some programs really did fail, for example, subsidized housing for inner-city residents.

My purpose in writing this letter is not to deny that progress has been made. But to cheer progress in a dynamic society where almost everything is constantly "progressing" appears to me to border on banality. It is really the exceptions and the remaining inequalities that are interesting, troublesome, and deserving of extra effort. While it is true that blacks have made progress, so have whites, and both groups have benefited from the events of the 60's. Here at the Joint Center for Political Studies we note that there are nearly 2,600 black elected officials in the United States today; we note blacks being elected where they have never been elected before or since Reconstruction. Yet blacks remain less than .5 to 1 per cent of all elected officials.

In conclusion, we see very little reason for stretching or for hunting for isolated facts to defend the efforts of the 60's. We have tangible evidence that both races benefited. We also have tangible evidence that the task before us remains immense.

HERRINGTON J. BRYCE
Joint Center for Political Studies
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Ben J. Wattenberg and Richard M. Scammon have advanced the thesis that a majority of black Americans can now be considered "middle class." While the 60's have definitely brought significant progress for blacks and few would recommend a return to the more deplorable circumstances of an earlier era, I do feel that some qualifications and modifications of their thesis and data are necessary.

Messrs. Wattenberg and Scammon use a number of income statistics to buttress their case. They argue that the ratio of black family income to comparable white income rose "dramatically" during the 60's from 53 per cent to 63 per cent. The bulk of this rise, however, occurred within a few short years during the Johnson administration when poverty programs were extremely active and the civil-rights enthusiasm was at its height. Between 1963 and 1967 the ratio increased from 53 per cent to 62 per cent. This growth, however, was not sustained. Since 1967 little progress has been made toward racial equalization of income. Secondly, most of this relative growth in black income has occurred in the South. . . .

Our authors next note the "startling" jump (13 per cent to 30 per cent) during the 60's in the pro-

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portion of black families earning more than $10,000 (in 1971 constant dollars). Perhaps they should have been more impressed by the relative growth between 1951 and 1961 when the percentage increased from 3 per cent to 13 per cent. Had this quadrupling occurred during the following decade, over half of all black families would be earning over $10,000 (as is true of white families). This indeed would have been a "startling" development.

Messrs. Wattenberg and Scammon then concentrate upon a collection of variables that have contributed to the "middle-classing" of black America. They argue that when one combines the factors of non-Southern residence, unbroken husband-wife family, and youth, "a truly striking statistic" emerges. Black families approach parity with comparable white families. This generalization requires some explanation and modification. First, the economically depressed condition of blacks in the South is scarcely novel. The authors note that in 1970 black family income in the South was only 57 per cent of white family income there, whereas it was 74 per cent outside this area. While technically correct, the figures tend to mask the fact that the march toward parity advanced far more rapidly during the 60's in the South than elsewhere. The Southern income ratio rose from 51 per cent in 1959 to 61 per cent in 1970, while outside the South there was little significant change in the ratio during the same period—it increased only from 71 per cent to 74 per cent, and in the Midwest the ratio actually declined from 74 per cent to 73 per cent. . . .

I must also register a complaint about Messrs. Wattenberg and Scammon's selective use of available statistics. On the same page of the government publication (U.S. Census Bureau, *The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States, 1971*) from which their above-noted statistics for 1970 were taken, were figures for 1971. But these statistics reflect less favorably on Messrs. Wattenberg and Scammon's thesis and were apparently selectively censored by the authors. In 1971 the black-income percentages for the South and the rest of the country were 56 per cent and 69 per cent, respectively, as opposed to 57 per cent and 74 per cent in 1970. . . . Even more note-

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worthy (and less optimistic) is the fact that the figures for 1971 indicate that Northern blacks were *less* equal to whites than they had been in those dark days at the end of the 50's. In the Northeast, black income as a percentage of white income declined from 69 per cent in 1959 to 67 per cent in 1971 while falling even more seriously in the North Central states, from 74 per cent to 69 per cent. Only in the West did black family income advance, from 67 per cent to 71 per cent. . . .

The second variable encompasses unbroken black husband-wife families whose income was more likely to approach equality with comparable white families. In 1970 in the North and West, it was 88 per cent, up from 76 per cent in 1959. Furthermore, for complete families with the head of the household under thirty-five years of age (the third variable), the percentage outside the South rose to 96 per cent, or virtual parity with whites. Such advances, however, were heavily dependent on the active participation of the wife in the labor force. The greater tendency for black married women to work explains much of this growth. As the Census Bureau noted: "The income parity observed for young black and white families in the North and West holds true for families in which both the husband and wife worked." In those young families in the North and West where only the husband worked, no significant gains were achieved in reducing the income differential between black and whites.

Finally, the number of black families combining all the required variables constituted a relatively small proportion of all black families in 1970. Only 6.7 per cent met the criteria, a modest increase over the 4.2 per cent of 1960. . . .

HAROLD X. CONNOLLY
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Stanford, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I agree with the basic thesis of "Black Progress and Liberal Rhetoric": that we do not adequately recognize the extent of black economic achievement during the 60's, though I also think a more balanced picture could be drawn. However, I strongly disagree with the reason cited by the authors for this failure: liberal rhetoric, and the crisis strategy of social change. The history of social change in America does support the theory that a perception of crisis is a prerequisite for substantial social efforts. Periods of substantial social legislation are brief and episodic. The reformist New Deal was dead by 1936 or 1937; it was followed by a brief postwar period of liberal legislation which itself was soon killed by the cold war and McCarthyism. Liberals who "allow" these periods to fade away prematurely are as culpable as those who carry crisis tactics to the point where they become counterproductive.

But the behavior or misbehavior of liberals is only a small element in the process. Two separable issues are involved: 1) have social welfare programs failed?; and 2) have conditions of life improved for some or all of our people? . . . To achieve a political majority around any program, it is necessary to phrase the goals broadly, grandly, and imprecisely. "End poverty, abolish dependence, full employment"—all such slogans imply impossibly grandiose goals. Such broad goals are necessary to shelter a coalition with divergent, perhaps conflicting, goals and very different priorities. . . . This oversell of multiple goals often produces diffuse programs with many sub-programs, each of which may be underfinanced, at least in terms of maximum achievement. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 with its many parts—Job Corps, Head Start, Community Action—is a prime illustration. Most programs almost inevitably fail to achieve their formal goals. But most pragmatic politicians and professionals accept this process, acknowledge its inevitability, call it "incrementalism," and expect the program segments to grow, mature, provide modest benefits, and add strength to the social fabric without achieving total "success." But all such programs can be called failures if this process is not understood.

A second factor . . . is the invisibility of success. To a very large measure, our society runs on crises. It is a commonplace phenomenon that the media mainly report disasters, failures, violence, unemployment, inflation, and war. One effect is that the progress that Messrs. Wattenberg and Scammon note is not as newsworthy as the continuing problems in these and other areas. Moreover, no one who wants a measure of social change can afford to lose public attention by talking in calm, balanced tones. The article illustrates this in its own super-optimistic reporting of the data. . . . Evidence of success is almost invisible in our daily lives; percentage changes in income and education among large numbers are not visible. The best example can be seen in the evolution of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' "modest but adequate" income level. In 1951, an income of $4,200 for a family of four was considered to provide a modest but adequate standard of living. Such a family was not affluent—drinking beer, not Scotch—but neither was it poor. In 1970, a family of four earning $10,764 found itself in the same position relative to the rest of society. Forty per cent of this change in money income was due to inflation, 60 per cent reflected changes in living standards. The population experienced a 60-per-cent rise in living standards in one generation, a remarkable economic accomplishment. But this increase remains invisible and unfelt; the beneficiary feels no improvement in his own life circumstances. He feels no better off relative to his world than did his parents before him. And thus a great economic miracle simply disappears under the impact of relative living standards.

How can our society ever achieve any sense of success or accomplishment under these circumstances? Policymakers must and do expect to be asked, "What have you done for me lately?" That some choose to invoke a crisis strategy earlier or later than others feel wise should not be an occasion for heresy-hunting on either side. Who can deny that a crisis strategy is a necessity at some time in order to achieve political coalitions and public attention? The strategy debate is better served by recognizing the gains and costs involved, not by internecine bloodbaths or breast-beating.

SYDNEY E. BERNARD
Ann Arbor, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In support of their contention that blacks have emerged into the "middle class," Ben J. Wattenberg and Richard M. Scammon cite the following facts from the U.S. Census Report: "Income for white families in America went up by 69 per cent in the 1960's, while income for black families went up

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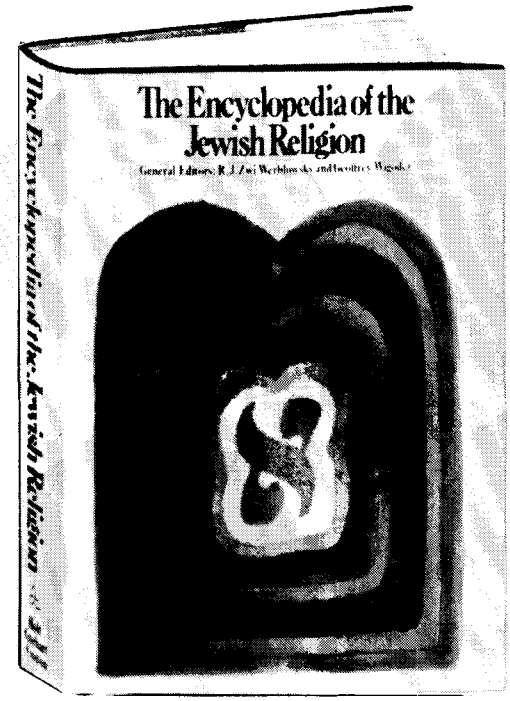
Did you know that the Bar Mitzvah ceremony is unknown in the Bible and Talmud? (see page 57) That Judaism frowns on celibacy? (see page 81) That the mystical Kabbalah has doctrines in common with Hinduism? (see page 389)



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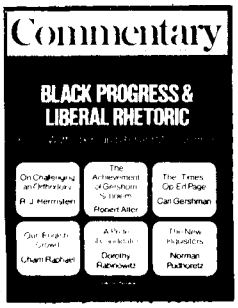

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by 99.6 per cent." Though these figures are accurate, they fail to point out that it is an average heavily weighted by the huge percentage increase in the South for black families (112.6 per cent). The South, incidentally, is the one region where a 100-per-cent increase in median income results in a median income just barely above the poverty line:

Black Median Income for South	
1959	*1969*
$2,423	$4,846

Poverty Line 1973
(TNR, estimate June 1973)
$4,446

The authors' presentation seems like a bit of statistical trickery. They report that the median income for white families in 1960 was $5,835, compared to $3,233 for blacks. The median 1970 income for whites was $10,236, compared to $6,516 for blacks—a difference of $4,401 from 1960. For blacks, this difference (between 1960 and 1970) was $3,283. Thus, the white increase (69 per cent) was a net improvement in the difference between white and black incomes of $3,720. In 1960 the *net* difference between blacks and whites was $2,602. Consequently, the net difference in income since 1960 has *widened*, not *narrowed*, as the percentages would suggest. The important fact in terms of progress is that the *gap* between black and white incomes increased by $1,118 between 1960 and 1970! . . .

The authors also report in defense of their "middle-class" hypothesis that "the ratio of *black family income* to *white family income* also changed dramatically in the period, climbing from 53 per cent in 1961 to 63 per cent in 1971." Again, their statistical facts are in order. It is the nature of the comparison which deserves our attention. The single concealed factor in these statistics is the strategic use of the terms *black family* and *white family*. Family income is a grossly misleading unit of comparison. First, black families typically have more multiple earners than white families (57 per cent versus 34 per cent in 1969) which skews the percentage upward. Additionally, the income of the average black family of three earners is not significantly different from the family income of the average white family with one earner—$9,794 for whites with one earner versus $9,027 for blacks with three earners. A comparison of incomes for black and white multiple-earner families reveals that the average black family needs an additional earner in order to earn substantially more than half of the income of a comparable white family. For those families with one earner, the median income of black families was about half that of white families. Black single-earner median income as a percentage of white income (for families with only a single earner) was only 52 per cent in 1969, not a particularly remarkable percentage. . . .

Concurrent with these facts is the important point that "while the median income of blacks and other races as a percentage of white family income has increased slowly since 1947, the dollar gap, adjusted for price changes, has widened." The gap in 1947 was about $2,500; in 1969, $3,600.

The authors expand the family fallacy by using young families as a unit of comparison. They state: "When [black] families are 'husband-wife' families [meaning both the husband and wife work] income is much likelier to approach equality with comparable white family incomes." Here the authors fail to make an obvious point clear, that these husband-wife teams are at the same low socioeconomic level, have the same socioeconomic needs, and perhaps are both forced to work for the same reasons: they are young, recently married, and need money to furnish their homes or apartments, etc. Consequently, these are perhaps the most alike low socioeconomic groups in America. . . . What seems more important is determining what happens to the respective couples after the newlywed status is over. The statistics suggest that the white woman usually quits work to mother her 2.1 children while the white husband's income increases to $11,000; whereas the black woman continues to work while giving birth to her 3.4 children and while her husband's income remains essentially fixed at about $6,000. This is a slightly different picture from the one presented by the authors.

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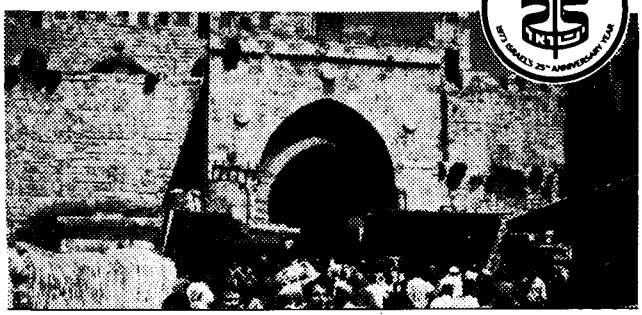

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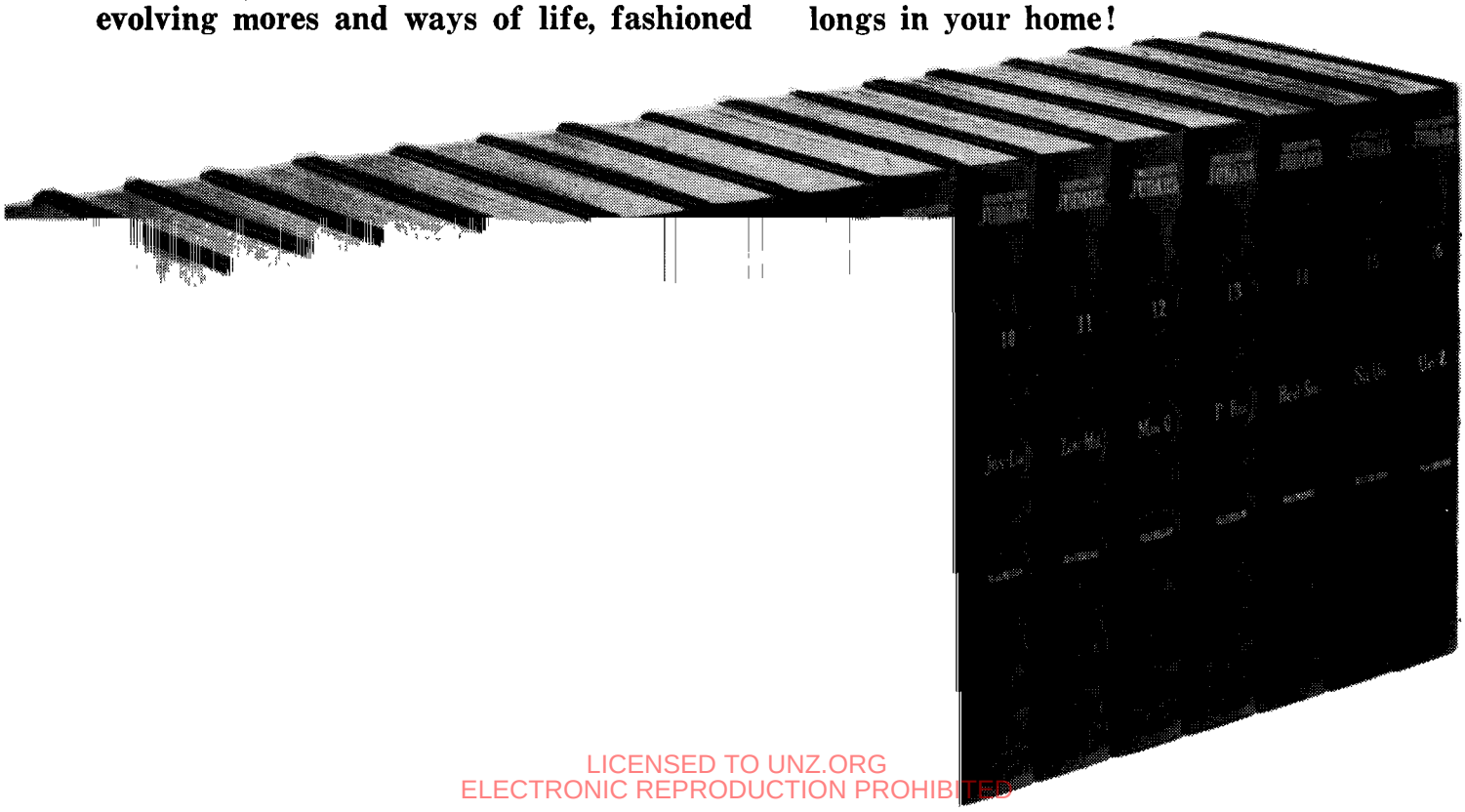

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The authors seem to have adopted as a research strategy the technique of selecting the most optimistic statistics in a given category and using these as *prima facie* evidence of progress, ignoring all others. As a case in point, they show that "a cross-tabulation of married men over age twenty reveals a far sharper *drop* in unemployment among blacks than for the population as a whole." This selection and its interpretation obscures the more important point; that blacks in all other categories have 100 per cent higher unemployment rates than whites. And even in the authors' example, the rates are 70 per cent higher than those for whites. This can hardly be thought of as an index of "middle-classness" or as a startling indicator of black progress.

The authors' use of education as an index of progress is perhaps the most accurate of the indices except for one glaring contradiction. They have rightly pointed out that the gap between white and black median years of education has been practically closed (U.S. Department of Labor reports a difference of only 0.4 of one year in 1970). This is surely a symbol of progress. Their limited, and rather parochial, interpretations have led them to make the following erroneous statement: "The significance of these data cannot be discounted by arguments that education has little to do with economic success." Had they investigated the soundness of these arguments, however, they no doubt would have uncovered the following rather startling fact: the median income of the highest educated blacks in professional job categories is equal to that of their white counterparts who have only an eighth-grade education. It is one of the cruel contradictions of this society that in every occupational category (except, ironically, professional black women in the South), whites are paid more—often with *much* less education—than their black counterparts. . . .

The authors' strategy of presentation changes a bit in explaining occupational statistics. The consequence of the interpretation is nevertheless the same. The authors are quick to point out that since 1960 the number of blacks in "other" work—"not-[so]-good" jobs—decreased from 4 million to 3.5 million, while there was a corresponding increase in white-collar jobs ("good" jobs) from 2.9 per cent to 5.1 per cent. (It is interesting to note that within the same sentence the authors have here switched their presentation from percentages to raw numbers.) Here the authors have abandoned the U.S. Census job-classification labels for a more expeditious and vaguer set. The terms "good" jobs and "not [so] good" jobs are inserted both to "lump" professional and craftsmen categories (this has the effect of inflating increases) under the "good" job category as well as to obscure the large numbers in the service and labor categories under the "not-[so]-good" job category. The utility of this relabeling procedure is readily seen when one realizes that though blacks represent only 11 per cent of the labor force, they constitute 61 per cent of the "not-[so]-good" category. This category consists mostly of day laborers, chambermaids, dishwashers, janitors, and so on. . . .

The cold implication of this matter is that no amount of token employment in white-collar occupations can offset the magnitude or the effect of having so many blacks in a servant status. It is ironic that in the authors' exuberance over "middle-classness" they fail to include this rather important fact of class status. After all, "middle-classness" requires a certain class status related to one's occupation line, and if blacks constitute 61 per cent of the lower-class jobs they must in some important sense constitute the lower class. It is hard to imagine in America that chambermaids and janitors would fit into the middle class. Black hustlers typically earn closer to the white median income but they are not considered middle class. In order to achieve a consistent improvement in the income differential between whites and blacks, and a concomitant change in class status, one of two things must occur with regard to occupation: either wages for service and labor categories ("non-good" jobs) will have to be substantially increased (accompanied by a change in attitude about the status of such jobs) or substantial numbers of blacks will have to be shifted to other occupational categories. The impact which this kind of occupational discrimination has had on the psyche of blacks is incalculable. . . .

Self-congratulations by white liberal Americans are hardly in order if black advancement is based upon effort and behavior greater than that required of the white community. It seems that it is here that the authors' interpretations are most deficient. It is plausible to assume that liberal legislation in the 60s' has in certain ways affected the progress of blacks in America. It is a gross oversimplification—if not an error—to attribute black progress solely to this one concern.

The statistics surely do not suggest such a simpleminded interpretation. Quite the contrary: they suggest that much of the black progress—if it can be called that—is due to an intense desire among blacks to "make it" in this society, whatever the cost. The statistics suggest that the costs are still very high. The facts show that there is a larger percentage of blacks working per family than whites while earning considerably less and while finding it harder to become employed and harder to hold employment. . . . In 1970, 8.5 per cent of blacks who had two or more earners had median incomes less than the established poverty line! In many areas of the country, the actual median take-home weekly pay for blacks is less than the weekly welfare allotments. . . .

We would also be remiss if we ignored the nature and relationship of racism in America to black progress. . . . The logic of the statistics dictates that as the gap in median years of education between blacks and whites closes (as it has been doing in the last twenty years), so should the gap in median income. This has not happened. The "liberal-legislation" interpretation provides no answer to this peculiarity. The mechanics of racism does.

The stability of the index showing the ratio of black to white median income is perhaps more important than any other observation about it. The explanation for such stability is apparently tied to the same mechanism which explains why black incomes do not change significantly with increased education. The same phenomenon exists—*to an even larger degree*—for women. Discriminatory practices seem fully to account for these differences in both cases. . . .

Similarly, the unemployment rate for blacks, which has been consistently double that of whites in all categories, cannot be explained by "lack-of-incentive" or "lack-of-education." . . .

"Category of employment" is

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another indicator which can no longer be attributed to "lack-of-incentive." . . . Fifty-eight per cent of service workers have from one to three years of high-school education or better. Yet 94 per cent in this category earn less than $10,000 per year (the white median income). The median years of schooling for blacks in professional categories is higher than that of whites, yet they earn $3,449 less for the same work. A reasonable interpretation of these facts would indicate that discriminatory practices account for these differences.

These facts taken together—the consistent stability of the ratio of incomes, the consistent nature of the high unemployment rate for blacks, the consistent allocation of and disproportionate number of blacks employed in lower-income and lower-status occupations, and the consistent lack of correlation between black educational advancements and increase in incomes relative to whites—are devastating indictments of the present system of discrimination. . . .

In conclusion, I can state without reservation that the road to true progress—consequently the road to true liberal self-gratification—is the removal of the constraints imposed by the system on these indicators. When this finally happens, the rate of progress for blacks will no doubt be as startling as the authors claim. . . .

HERBERT L. CALHOUN
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a black professional, I read Ben J. Wattenberg and Richard M. Scammon's article with some bemusement. While there certainly is no doubt that blacks have progressed, the authors, by selective choice and adroit presentation, have obscured some realities in order to display a more roseate situation than the facts justify. One example is in their handling of income data.

In 1960, black family annual median income was $4,236, 55 per cent of white family income of $7,664. The authors purport to see a ". . . dramatic change in the decade . . . with black income rising to 63 per cent of white in 1971 . . . a sharp progress. . . . a catching up. . . ." But is it? Using their figure of $10,285 for median white family income in 1971, black median income in 1971 was $6,480. Thus an income gap (favoring whites) of $3,428 in 1960 *increased* to a gap of $3,805 by 1971. So much for "catching up." Since people don't buy meat with percentages or pay rent with ratios, why not deal with dollars instead of obscuring a worsening situation with a mathematical screen? Even U.S. government Census Bureau publications are honest enough to point out the misleading aspects of these "percentage gains" in light of the associated increase in the dollar gap.

Compare next the handling of data on unemployment and families earning over $10,000. The genuine decrease in black unemployment vis-à-vis whites is lucidly shown by changing percentage figures to ratios. Curiously, however, this technique is not used in the exposition of the ". . . startling jump in the percentage of black families earning $10,000 in the 1960's . . . from 13 per cent increasing to 30 per cent compared with 3 per cent increasing to 13 per cent in the 1950's." Here *only* the percentages are given. While it is obvious that 30 per cent is better than 13 per cent, when one applies the ratio technique a less rosy situation emerges. At the end of the 1950's, the improvement ratio was 4.3 to 1 (13 per cent ÷ 3 per cent); by the end of the 1960's it had *dropped* to 2.3 to 1 (30 per cent ÷ 13 per cent). Had the improvement rate of the 1950's been maintained, 56 per cent (4.3 x 13 per cent) of black families would have been over $10,000 by 1971. Logically then, the 30 per cent level actually attained is no "startling jump"; it really marks a declining rate of improvement (the authors admit this several pages later but never produce any figures to illustrate it).

By various adjustments and estimates, the authors arrive at $6,000 per year as the threshold value to enter the middle class. And lo, this value permits 52 per cent of black families to squeak in. Without commenting on the validity of the $6,000 figure, I found it odd that no mention was made of the percentage of white families who had "made it" into middle-classdom in 1971. The answer: 77.5 per cent of white families had incomes over $6,000 versus 52.2 per cent of black families. . . .

I think it is clear that the figures the authors present don't always tell the whole story. . . . Moreover, thinking blacks know that a significant portion of progress is in

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reality limited tokenism or a veneer which, when scratched, quickly reveals the same old condition or a worsened one (see above). There is nothing "incredible" about the Julian Bond statement Messrs. Wattenberg and Scammon quote: it is simply the truth. Bond acknowledges progress and especially how far the black has come from where he once was. But, quite correctly, he notes that, using the only meaningful measure—the condition of blacks versus that of whites in the U.S.—blacks as a group are still essentially second-class citizens. This is not liberal rhetoric; it is a fact which can be proved by using honest statistics.

The scenario the authors propose of the liberal community and blacks relaxing and toasting the "massive progress" they have made could easily lead to disaster. Going back to the 60's doesn't require repeal of the Voting Rights Act or any other such legislation. The same effect can be achieved by slowing even further the already reluctant, foot-dragging, time-consuming *enforcement* procedures usually associated with all these progressive acts; witness school-desegregation litigation *still* in the courts—nineteen years after the Supreme Court ruling.

Considering all that is yet to be done and what could have and should have been done, a case *can* be made for the ". . . failure of liberalism." But unless or until something better develops, I don't propose deserting liberalism. Nor, on the other hand, do I propose that liberals trumpet and rejoice because blacks finally are getting a larger part of the benefits for which we've been paying for generations—benefits long overdue us. . . .

L. Templeton

Toronto, Ontario

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . The deliberate concentration on injustice, inequality, the unresponsiveness of government to the needs of the people, etc., are all working tools with which liberals and radicals have, quite successfully, labored to bring about the social and political changes they deemed necessary. Continuous dissent and the denial that any meaningful progress has taken place have become their most valued weapon. . . . To turn to rationality now would not be easy; it might seriously alienate all those who simply do not believe any more that anything good has happened, or can happen, in America under the present system. . . .

I would be grateful to Messrs. Wattenberg and Scammon for some more statistics on the future of black progress: namely, how many blacks are directly employed today in welfare programs and how many outside? . . . The crucial test will come when the vast army of clerks, social workers, consultants, and bigger and lesser bureaucrats will have to leave their desks and try to meet the usual free-enterprise-system standards of labor selection. After some initial unemployment, how many of them will make it and how many will slip back onto the welfare rolls? If in the end a great number of these jobs will prove to have been just another vehicle for welfare assistance, the general picture of the upward economic movement of blacks will have to be reviewed. And perhaps we should listen with more tolerance to the resentment of those workers who suspect that their tax dollars have been used to support an artificially-created middle class.

Ella Jacin

Norwalk, Connecticut

To the Editor of Commentary:

The refusal of liberal politicians to accept at face value the evidence of their considerable achievements leaves Ben J. Wattenberg and Richard M. Scammon understandably puzzled. . . . I submit that this behavior may lose much of its puzzling quality if instead of attempting to understand it by the criteria of the pragmatic politician we look at it in terms of the stance of the "true believer" and the "committed idealist."

I am not suggesting that either of those two designations fits the average liberal politician but only that he was mesmerized by the rhetoric of those who were not merely looking for a reasonable amelioration of conditions at hand but rather for a total, almost messianic, transformation of our society. . . .

To put it crassly, the liberal politician was brainwashed into accepting as the voice of the electorate only those voices which totally condemned America. . . . The hapless liberal politician, to whom listening to the "voice of the people" is the bread of survival, mistook this chant of total, irredeemable American evil as true coin and joined it publicly to

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insure his standing with the electorate as he perceived it. . . .

The McGovern debacle must have come as a shock. Speeches had to be rewritten and verbal habits of a decade had to be discarded. But all this takes time. Even now, the scornful words still come forth in a kind of Pavlovian compulsion, and the habit of bad-mouthing American achievements across the board seems hard to break. Thus, for example, the end of our direct military involvement in Vietnam is given only the most grudging recognition. . . . Nevertheless, a new day in public utterances by the liberal politician is upon us. . . . The public praise of Lyndon Johnson by well-known liberals is telling evidence that liberal politicians have been doing their survival-directed homework. . . .

It is a no-risk bet that by the time of the next Congressional elections liberal politicians will have completed this metamorphosis and may well own up, publicly and audibly, to the considerable success their programs have achieved in recent years. . . .

RONALD GRUEN

Dallas, Texas

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is reassuring to read in your pages that the 60's were not quite the absolute failure COMMENTARY has been busy claiming them to be: Ben J. Wattenberg and Richard M. Scammon argue that significant sections of the black population have made considerable economic progress since 1950.

Of course, it is important to remember that this interpretation of the census data does not go far enough. Mobility assessments which focus entirely on one isolated part of the population tend to misrepresent the overall socioeconomic state of the nation—they do not, for example, take into account those black and white Americans for whom severe relative deprivation and serious intergenerational immobility have been and continue to be a constant reality.

Nevertheless, it is good that COMMENTARY readers are finally being informed about the potential of planned social intervention on behalf of an egalitarian agenda. The next step is to recognize that limited results come from limited programs; with more time, more resources, and a clearer understanding of what works and how, perhaps "progress" can be a nationally experienced phenomenon.

COLIN GREER

Social Policy
New York City

BEN J. WATTENBERG and RICHARD M. SCAMMON write:

Before dealing with the specific items raised by COMMENTARY readers, it seems useful to make several general points about their comments as well as about a great number of other comments that have appeared in the press and on television since the publication of "Black Progress and Liberal Rhetoric."

First, we must stress, even more firmly if possible than we did in the article, that we are talking about progress, not parity. As early as the second paragraph in our article we say that "the economic and social gap separating whites and blacks is still a national disgrace." This theme is repeated again and again and again throughout the article.

If the economic and social gap is still a disgrace, it follows—as a number of our critics have pointed out—that there are some disgraceful aspects to it. We concur. But what our article is about is progress. Having read the rebuttals and the other comments as well, we still maintain that there has been a great deal of progress in the black community over the last decade or dozen years. That is the critical, substantive point of the article.

Second, there has been a tendency on the part of some critics of the article to say, in effect, "Well, the Julian Bond quotation is only one remark of one man; there really has been no effort to downgrade or downplay the nature of black progress in America. Name your names or drop the charges." It seems to us that most of the readers' letters printed above would serve rather well on a list of those who deny the facts of black progress. Moreover, although there have been some very favorable remarks by civil-rights and black leaders, some of the comments in the public press, including those by Vernon Jordan of the Urban League and Dr. John Morsell of the NAACP, as well as the statements by the Congressional Black Caucus, would also qualify for such a list.

Third, there is something very saddening about the spectacle of civil-rights leaders making light of legitimate progress. This progress was not bestowed upon the poor black masses by their leaders, or by Lyndon Johnson's programs, or by a hot economy. It was progress made by people who, when finally given a chance, worked like hell to make something of it. They succeeded; and the deprecation of such progress, particularly at a time when we hear so much about the need for "black pride," is painful to observe.

Fourth, and finally, our article was an article and not an encyclopedia. We attempted to deal with good data and bad data, but not all data.

Regarding the specifics, let us deal first with some of the loaded comments, from Left and Right, before moving on to more legitimate inquiries.

Herbert L. Calhoun is living in a statistical dream world. He talks of the "consistent stability of the ratio of incomes," while the facts show a catching-up. He says we place chambermaids and janitors in our definition of "middle class"; we do not, of course. He misreads, claiming we switch from percentages to millions, when in fact the sentence he refers to deals only in millions. He says that we obscure the fact that black unemployment is about twice the rate of white unemployment, when we stated just that in the first sentence of our section on employment. Finally, Mr. Calhoun sees blacks in a "servant status." That is harsh language, sure to be resented by blacks, and whites, in the service jobs to which he refers (and which we, and the Census Bureau, include in our "bad" job category) as well as by policemen, firemen, and airline stewardesses who also happen to fall into that occupational pigeonhole.

L. Templeton also seems to have misread the article. We do not establish $6,000 per year as the threshold value to enter the middle class. Our cut-off line is $8,000 per year throughout the United States, except in the South where it is $6,000. He also demonstrates a Malthusian knack with statistics. If black progress toward bridging the $10,000-plus family-income level were to continue at the rate he suggests, by 1980 almost 130 per cent of black families in the United States would be earning over $10,000 per year—a nice trick if you can do it.

We do not agree with Ella Jacin that the "vast army of clerks, social

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workers, consultants, and bigger and lesser bureaucrats" make up the core of black progress. In fact, as we pointed out, we are "pro-programs"; we think the bureaucrats have, on balance, helped the situation, and we are not anxious to see them "leave their desks and try to meet the usual free-enterprise-system standards of labor selection."

Now to the more solidly grounded comments of Harold X. Connolly, Herrington J. Bryce, and Sydney E. Bernard.

First, the notion of "absolute gap" versus "relative gap" must be understood. It is true that the absolute dollar gap is increasing, but the ratio of black to white income is also closing. In our judgment, the relative rate of closure is far more important than the absolute rate. Suppose, for example, that black income were $5,000 a year and white income were $10,000 a year in a given year. Suppose then that a decade later black income had increased to $40,000 and white income had increased to $50,000. Given such data, the absolutists could claim that the absolute dollar gap had doubled. In point of fact, in the decade of the 1960's, in current dollars, white income went up by 69 per cent and black income went up by 100 per cent, and that seems to be a fairly decent rate of closure. Were black income to have fully closed the absolute dollar gap, it would have had to go up by 136 per cent; were black income to reach total white-income levels, black income would have had to triple, an unlikely occurrence over the course of a single decade.

In short, what we are saying is: you can't get there without passing through here. Even a substantial rate of catch-up would, for a certain time, have to proceed relatively, not absolutely. That is an unfortunate law of mathematics, but it is a law nonetheless.

Something also should be said about the South. As it happens, the South is where more than half the blacks in the United States live—53 per cent in 1970 to be exact. As defined by the Census Bureau, the South includes such places as Baltimore, Washington, Wilmington, Charleston, Miami, Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Dallas, and El Paso, as well as more obvious locales. If black income is going up more sharply in the South than elsewhere, what is wrong with that? White income is going up sharply in the South as well. Statistically

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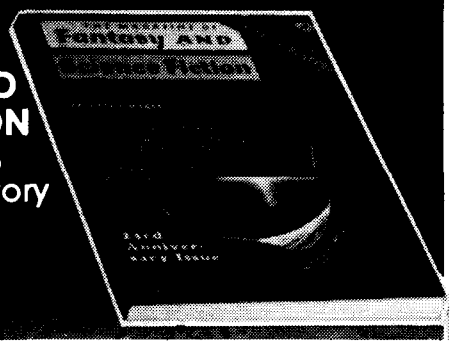

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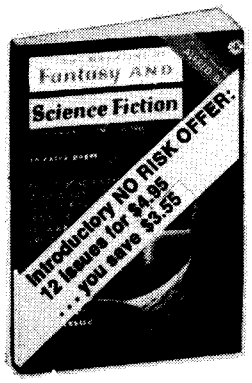

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this helps blacks because blacks live disproportionately in the South.

But Mr. Connolly's statement about the way we use Southern data does have some validity. We were leery of making extensive use of the data Mr. Connolly cites, and the regional cross-tabulations therein, because they do not seem to square. Thus, the national Negro-to-White income ratio from 1970 to 1971 falls by a single point, but the component regional parts fall much more sharply. The 1970 data also do not add up convincingly. This is a statistical phenomenon apparently caused in part by the size of the sample and in part by the nature of the weighting procedure used in calculating the regional ratios. Accordingly, because the other, macrocosmic data were clear and solid, they are what we used, and properly we believe.

Mr. Connolly's point that in the income field there has been a plateau since the late 1960's is correct—which is why we clearly made the same point: "The record of the first three Nixon years cannot be called better than mixed. . . . Black income viewed as a fraction of white income seemed to reach a plateau."

It is also true, as Mr. Bryce points out, that the question of "middle class" is purely definitional. That is why we attempted to define it. We would stick by our definition. But we disagree with Mr. Bryce that "much of the black gains . . . might easily be reversed." Earlier black gains held because they were built on a solid structure—in large part due to the move from a rural to an urban society. The more recent gains we believe will hold because they also are built on a solid structure: increasing education and better jobs.

We do not "dismiss lightly" the high black unemployment rate. All we say is that given a choice of who should be employed—a married man with children or a teen-ager looking for a part-time job—we would opt for the married man. This is not, however, a choice we like to make, and indeed we believe that government efforts can eliminate the necessity for having to make such choices in the future.

The evidence we have seen concerning union-referral of black apprentices would indicate that once a black is in a union he gets a square shake.

Mr. Bryce is dead wrong when he says that housing with inadequate plumbing occupied by blacks remained constant from 1960 to 1970. In fact, it fell from 41 per cent in 1960 to 17 per cent in 1970.

Mr. Bernard's idea that the beneficiary of a 60-per-cent rise in living standards feels no improvement in his own life circumstances is simply not backed up by available attitudinal studies.

We would agree with Mr. Bernard that a "crisis strategy" is a necessity at some times in order to achieve political coalitions and public attention. The key question is: Is this one of those times?. We think not. We would favor a "problem/progress" strategy—there is a major problem to be confronted, we have been confronting it, we have made headway, we will continue to make headway. A crisis strategy works best when there is a crisis, not the ongoing amelioration of crisis. Voters are smart and they know the difference.

Finally, to our friend Ronald Gruen in Dallas, Texas—thanks. It's nice to know that someone understands.

A POSTSCRIPT: On July 2 the Brookings Institution released a study by Richard B. Freeman that found "dramatic" improvement in the economic situation of black Americans over the past decade. The study, according to a New York *Times* report, ascribed the improvement primarily to the Great Society programs of the 1960's, while also acknowledging the general prosperity of the period as a large contributing factor. This study by the Brookings Institution would seem to bear out completely the substance of our own article and to add further confirmation to the fact of black progress in recent years.

Nuclear Weapons

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his letter on foreign policy [Letters from Readers, June], commenting on Adam B. Ulam's review of his book *Peace in the Balance* [March], Eugene V. Rostow says that in the book he criticized the United States for its failure at the end of World War II to insist on free elections in Eastern Europe and to prevent the takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1948 "while we still had a nuclear monopoly."

This can only mean that Mr. Rostow feels that the United States should have employed the threat of nuclear weapons or the actual use of such weapons to enforce free elections in Eastern Europe and to prevent a Communist administration in Czechoslovakia. That a professor at the Yale Law School (who once was dean of that school) can even now, in 1973, make such a statement shows the demoralization which has spread so widely throughout the country.

OTTO NATHAN

New York City

Margaret Mead

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Shocked onlookers to Sheila K. Johnson's terrorist bombing of a famous international bridge ["A Look at Margaret Mead," March] must surely wonder what leads fanatics to engage in senseless destruction. The answer here, as always, is dogmatic politics. Mrs. Johnson wants us all (anthropologists and natives alike) to abide by a particular system for the ascription of status in anthropology. She doesn't understand the complicated system that we natives (or even the simpler one which anthropologists themselves) do in fact use, but she knows that we are stupid for using it. That is not only unsuccessful politics, but bad anthropology as well.

Besides, Mrs. Johnson doesn't understand stools, either. The whole history of stools strongly suggests that between each two stools is a third that some people will deny is there because it doesn't have a name yet.

ROBERT G. ANDERSON III

Bloomington, Indiana

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I strongly disagree with Sheila K. Johnson's observations about Margaret Mead, whom I believe to be one of the most rational and lucid interpreters of our present society. . . .

Dr. Mead appears to be an excellent spokesman for the present generation of youth precisely because of her life experience, her sociological knowledge, and her articulateness. One hears the same views expressed by young people on campuses, in television discussions, and on the streets, but with less clarity and perspective. The young *cannot* have the perspective of one who has lived seventy-two years, and among the "grandparent generation" there are always those few who seem intuitively to

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have the ability and imagination to share the wave-length of the young. . . .

The present generation gap *is* different from previous generation gaps in that revolutionary changes have taken place with extreme rapidity as compared with the pace of earlier historical developments. One does not need statistical documentation and "control groups" to develop philosophical theories. Such studies and their results can be used in various ways to prove varying points of view. In the end, one's acceptance of a particular philosophy must be subjectively influenced, or there would not be so many different schools of thought. I opt for Margaret Mead's.

ELINOR GROBAN

Glencoe, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . What emerges from Sheila K. Johnson's article is a fluent exposition of the pettiness long heard among graduate students of anthropology and among Margaret Mead's less successful colleagues. . . . Dr. Mead is accused of having generalized and popularized, to say nothing of not having sacrificed herself upon the high altar of "scientific method," and, seemingly worse, of having put her nose in areas in which she did not have a Ph.D.—namely, her audacity some years ago in telling the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that there would be no peace dividend after the Vietnam war . . . because those in power would not, rather than could not, attend to our domestic ills. . . .

Anthropology is a field which to have any practical value must generalize from the panorama of social, economic, and political arrangements and thoughts of various groups in various environments. One may, using the "scientific method," state precisely that the Arapesh use more or less bones in their stew than the Tchambuli, but the "verified data" fed back by the "method," while making interesting reading in specialized journals, will, for example, avail us little in understanding the Chinese, Russians, Vietnamese, or ourselves.

Dr. Mead has contributed . . . more to people's understanding of themselves and others than anyone in her field. Without these contributions, many of the departments which house her critics would doubtless not exist. . . .

FREDERIC WILE

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Sheila K. Johnson's comments on Margaret Mead are well taken, but Mrs. Johnson appears to accept an explanation of the current generation gap which is just as simplistic as Margaret Mead's theory. Today's generation gap involves much more than the usual, natural gap between parent and child. It is ironic that Margaret Mead in her comparative study of New Guinea cultures touched on the key to the current gap when she noted that underlying each culture is an "assumption" about the nature of man which determines the shape of the culture. Each of man's cultures does reflect a particular concept of human nature, which has been arrived at or evolved in a myriad of ways. Today, the concept of human nature underlying our culture is changing, and this change is the real reason for the generation gap. The older group is essentially a product of a culture which reflected the concept that man's instincts were his baser side and that he needed to be protected from them. The younger group is evolving a culture based upon the concept that man's instincts as reflected in his feelings are good (humanizing), and that he, therefore, needs to be free to follow them. In between, the middle-age group reflects varying hues of these two extremes. Perhaps out of this dichotomy will come the understanding that while our instinctive drives do help us survive as human (i.e., capable of loving), we are free from specific instinctive guidance and limitations on how to recognize and respond to these drives. . . . Perhaps eventually mankind will come to accept the fact that human nature is not plastic but distortable, and that the degree to which a culture fosters or interferes with human development is directly related to the degree of accuracy of the particular concept of human nature which underlies the culture.

MARILYN KRAMER

Wausau, Wisconsin

SHEILA K. JOHNSON writes:

I find it intriguing that none of the four letter-writers takes issue with my basic assertion that Margaret Mead is to be appreciated chiefly as a deft popularizer and moralizer. What they seem to resent is my attitude toward this phenomenon: Marilyn Kramer and Elinor Groban because I am not sufficiently impressed with Mead's philosophy of life; Frederic Wile and Robert G. Anderson because they suspect me of being involved in academic wars fought over "who is more purist than thou." For the record: I hold no university post and I was not trying to issue a ukase against popularizations, interpretations of our society, or contributions to people's understanding of themselves. I merely thought that it was time for someone in the field of anthropology to point out to a more general audience what is well-known within anthropological circles: that Margaret Mead's work is not very theoretically rigorous and that she is by no means an "expert" on everything under the sun. Sara Sanborn ["An American Family," May] makes much the same point concerning Mead's trumpetings on behalf of "An American Family." In short, I find Margaret Mead's opinions stimulating and sometimes acute, but when she ventures into areas where she has little or no special knowledge I am no more inclined to take her seriously than I am Benjamin Spock's pronouncements on the Vietnam war, Linus Pauling's views about Vitamin C, or Edward Teller's fulminations about Communism.

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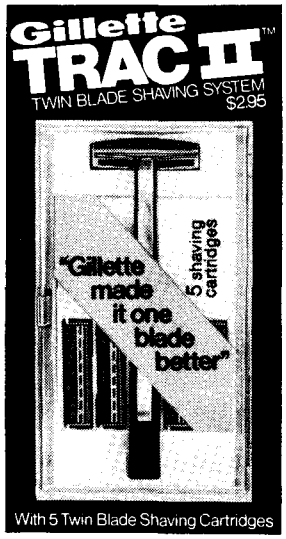

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Government and the People

Aaron Wildavsky

We shall never learn what needs to be learned about the American political system until we understand not only what the system does to the people, but what the people do to the system. Political institutions are no different from other organizations: to the great question of organizational life—who will bear the costs of change?—the answer, in the public as in the private sphere, is, "someone else, not me." The universal tendency to make life easy for ourselves and to impose difficulties on others applies equally to politicians, and when they find their lives intolerable no one should be surprised that they react by seeking to lay their burdens on the shoulders of others.

Especially during the past decade, almost our whole attention as citizens has been devoted to the ways in which politicians have failed to serve the people. Few have asked how politicians manage to live in the world, because it is assumed that they are doing fine and that the problem is to make them behave decently toward us—almost as if politicians lived somehow apart from American life. Yet it would be strange indeed if our politicians were a special breed, uninfluenced by their milieu, springing full-born like Minerva from the head of Jove in a world they never made, but on which they work their mythical powers.

Politicians are like other animals; indeed their behavior, like our own, can often be analogized to that observed in lower forms of life. Laboratory experiments show that rats who are consistently given contradictory commands become neurotic, if not psychotic. The same phenomenon is readily visible among politicians. Give them incompatible commands, insist that they fulfill contradictory impulses at the same time, and they too will show the classical symptoms—withdrawal, self-mutilation, random activity, and other forms of bizarre behavior unrelated to the ostensible task at hand. An occasional deviant is even known to lash out at his experimenters, or at least at the apparatus in which he is enmeshed, though he remains quite incapable of understanding why he worked so hard to accomplish so little, or why life is so bitter when it should be so sweet.

Aaron Wildavsky is dean of the Graduate School of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley and the author of *The Revolt Against the Masses and Other Essays on Politics and Public Policy*.

We are all, in fact, doing better and feeling worse.* Every standard of well-being, from housing to health, shows that every sector of the population, however defined, including all racial, religious, and ethnic groupings, has improved its lot in past decades. Even the twin problems of crime and drugs, areas in which we are vividly conscious of recent deterioration, have been considerably reduced in severity, so far as we are able to judge, since the turn of the century. When heroin was legal there were proportionately more addicts in the population; when the nation was younger and poorer there were more criminals, or at least a correspondingly greater degree of crime. Why, then, do so many feel so bad—and why do they continue to feel so bad when, of the two causes reflexively invoked to explain this feeling, the first, the Vietnam war, has come to an end while the second, racial inequity, has clearly and visibly diminished? I cannot pursue this subject in all its ramifications here. Instead I wish to add another element to the puzzle—the manufacture of incompatible policy demands that impose burdens on government which no government can meet.

The fact that the public demands on government in the various areas of policy are contradictory, in the sense that pursuing one policy inevitably means prohibiting the enactment of another, does not mean that an evil genius has been at work programming the political system for a nervous breakdown. Coordination need not require a coordinator; it can be tacit and informal as well as overt. Men coordinate their activities through adherence to a common body of assumptions or through the sharing of a common world view. Quite the same kinds of contradictions can be created by various people in different places making vocal demands that turn out to be mutually opposed. The lack of central direction, in fact, is an advantage because it adds to the general confusion: politicians are given a hard time but they do not know on whom to vent their own frustration. For our purposes it is not necessary to know whether demands on government are made by those who wish to see

* See my essays, "The Empty-head Blues: Black Rebellion and White Reaction," *Public Interest*, No. 11, Spring 1968; "The Revolt Against the Masses," *The Revolt Against the Masses and Other Essays on Politics and Public Policy* (Basic Books, 1971); "The Search for the Oppressed," *Freedom at Issue*, No. 16, November-December 1972.

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it fail, and therefore delight in giving it tasks it cannot manage, or who wish to see it succeed, and take pleasure in asking it to perform feats hitherto unaccomplished. Whether it stems from those who love government too little or from those who love it too much, the results of this pressure are the same: government is asked to perform wonders, but the attainment of one wonder often automatically precludes the possibility of attaining another, or many others.

The incompatibility of policy demands is a manifestation of a more general withdrawal of sovereignty from government in America. The rights of government and of politicians are being systematically whittled down. Public officials and professional politicians can no longer organize their political parties as they please, or hold meetings in closed sessions, or keep their papers secret, or successfully sue others for slandering them—even when they can show the allegations to be false—or make the smallest decisions without being hauled into court to convince judge and attorney they have followed standards of due process, considered every conceivable alternative, consulted all who might possibly be injured, or otherwise abandoned virtually every sense of what it used to mean to rule by enforcing binding regulations. We demand more of government but we trust it less. Angered and annoyed by evident failures, our reaction is not to reduce our expectations of what government can accomplish but to decrease its ability to meet them. That is how a society becomes ungovernable.

THE legislation proposed by Lyndon Johnson and enacted during the first eighteen months of his Presidency wiped out the New Deal and destroyed both the historical coalition and the universe of common assumptions on the basis of which American citizens and political activists alike had long understood what was happening in the national life. By enacting every piece of social legislation it could lay its hands on, Congress obliterated all the old issues; where once a citizen knew on which side of a given question he stood, now all was confusion.

The passage of the Great Society legislation, in addition, had a devastating effect on many sectors of the federal bureaucracy. The second worst thing that can happen to anybody is to strive for a lifetime and fail to get what he wants. The first worst thing is to strive and to get and to discover that it is not good. Think of people who spent, say, twenty years in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and its predecessors, trying desperately to secure huge federal appropriations for education. In the mid-1960's they got them; they still have them, but they have discovered that the ground has shifted and that the clientele whose interests they thought they were serving is not the clientele the new policies are aimed at. So they fail and they are bewildered.

In the past, the clients of the New Deal had been the temporarily depressed but relatively stable lower and middle classes, people who were on the whole willing and able to work but who had been restrained by the economic situation; if a hand were extended to them or if the economic picture brightened, things improved for them right away. It hardly mattered one way or the other what government did or did not do in their behalf. Now, however, government policy was being designed to deal not with such people but with the *severely* deprived, those who actually needed not merely an opportunity but continuing, long-term assistance. No previous government had ever attempted to do for this sector of the population—those whom Marx had called the lumpenproletariat—what the American government set out to do. Yet nobody knew *how* to go about it, either. In the field of education, for example, no one had the faintest clue as to what amount of "input" would produce the desired result, and so vast amounts of money and even vaster amounts of enthusiasm were poured into various programs that ultimately ended in failure and bewilderment (as it turns out, we have learned that variations in expenditures of almost four to one make absolutely no difference—or only slight difference—in student performance, and that other variables, known and unknown, must be taken into account).

Far from giving up in the face of such complex ignorance, the tendency instead was to place the emphasis on those variables that did seem controllable. This led to the concept of community action. If no solutions were available and no one had the foggiest notion of how to do anything, it *was* possible to increase the demand for solutions, to create pressure from below that would effect the release of ever increasing amounts of federal money. But the fact that government was trying to deal with a different clientele and that no one knew how to do it meant that an awful lot of money was invested without accomplishing very much. The escalation of demands together with the lack of knowledge of solutions meant a multiplication of programs, each under- or over-financed, each justified by the notion that it was somehow an experiment that would prove something.

There is perhaps nothing new in all this, but the political consequences have not been seen as clearly as they might be. Welfare today has become a political albatross. In the past, those who paid for welfare may not have liked it while those who received it, if they did not love it, at least found it preferable to the alternative. Government got credit from those who received the money and demerits from those who had to pay. Since the poor were more numerous than the wealthy, a political trade-off was effected and things seemed to work out. Today the taxpayers curse and the welfare recipients tell government where to get off. The welfare system gets credit nowhere.

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PEOPLE who are involved in revolutions are usually the last to recognize what has been happening all around them. While the War on Poverty was being waged, those fighting the battles understandably lacked the time, energy, or discernment to see anything like the full implications of their actions. Like good soldiers everywhere, they went from skirmish to skirmish, leaving the grand strategy to generals who, as every classic account of warfare tells us, understood less than anyone else. First, as noted, the generals radiated a sense of hope: wonderful things could be done. On this basis many new programs were launched and even more were proposed, to capitalize on the new potential for eliminating poverty. Second, also as noted, they generated a sense of despair: hardly anything seemed to be working. Out of this was born a new determination to overcome obstacles—in the form of new programs. Third, whether one had hoped or despaired, it became almost a reflex action to call on government to justify the hope or overcome the despair. One consistent trend in this concatenation was the proliferation of demands on government from all quarters. Another trend, seldom noticed, was the incompatibility of the demands.

This particular characteristic of the public-policy debate of the 60's is still very much with us, and it can be seen at work in areas as diverse as welfare and election reform. Thus the same people who demand that government increase the levels of support and the numbers of people on welfare are just as likely to assert in the next breath that welfare is a total failure, that it costs too much, and that it should be scrapped. Similarly, the demand that the political parties be "democratized" and made more representative is often linked to the demand that the costs of elections be reduced so that the rich will not control the democratic process. As Nelson Polsby has pointed out, it is impossible to do both: democratization in practice means more primaries, more conventions, more meetings—in other words, increased costs.

Or consider employment. There have basically been two objectives in this area of policy: employ the hard-core and create jobs at reasonable costs. It is very expensive to train the hard-core; that is why they are hard-core. It is also very discouraging, because many will not get jobs and many others will not keep them. But in addition, if a government agency has actually been able to show that it created a number of jobs that people filled and stayed in for a while at some kind of reasonable cost (by reasonable cost I mean that it has cost less than it would have just to give them the money), it has then been criticized for dealing with people who were too employable. This is known as "creaming," getting jobs for the best of the worst, so that anyone who has actually found a job was, *ipso facto*, as Groucho Marx might have said, not the right kind of person to have tried to employ in the first place.

Consider housing, where the demand has been to give preference to the worst-off and provide a better environment. That has led to such monstrosities as the Pruitt Igoe project in St. Louis, finally dynamited in order to reduce the incidence of social evil. Or consider the environment. It is tempting to condemn both pollution and high prices, but there is an intimate connection between the two. Today we expect our government to provide pure air and use less energy: it cannot do both at the same time.

How about community action? We demand widespread participation and we want fast action on the problems of the poor. Participation, however, requires built-in delays; the more committees, the more levels, the more people, the more time lost. It may not really be time wasted if greater participation results, but few remember the original impetus when frustration sets in.

The mischiefs unwittingly created by placing the phrase "maximum feasible participation" in legislation have been amply documented so far as government agencies are concerned. The documentation, however, is incomplete. Efforts to implement the spirit of the phrase have also wreaked havoc with the minority communities themselves. The idea was to facilitate the emergence of indigenous leadership, but, as Judith May has persuasively demonstrated,* the paradoxical result has been to delegitimate virtually everyone in black communities who could claim to be a leader because there is always some criterion he does not meet. If poor, he may not live exactly in the right neighborhood. If professional, he may not be poor enough. And so forth. Thus the only people who fit the prescription are those who are poor and are in no danger of getting rich, who have lived in the neighborhood for a long time and who cannot get out, and who often care so little they seldom attend meetings of the numerous poverty programs. Such people, it has turned out, have precisely the characteristics—lack of motivation, lack of experience, lack of ability—that do not commend them to their neighbors.

The essential perversity of the policy milieu is its ability to frustrate nearly everyone at the same time. Few programs, for instance, are more noble in intent than those calling for the provision of extra resources and services to the educationally deprived. Since there is not enough money to go around to all who might be considered poor, amendments have been passed at the federal and state level requiring that the most severely deprived be given substantial additional increments so that the massing of resources will have some palpable effect on them. It is difficult to argue with this sensible point of view, but the political impact on the

* Judith V. May, *The Struggle for Authority: Four Poverty Programs in Oakland* (doctoral dissertation in progress, University of California, Berkeley).

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near-poor, who are too well off to receive aid but poor enough to need it, has been severe. They are more easily helped because they have a bit more with which to begin. As they observe extra resources going to the very poor, who are most in need but least likely to be helped, they cannot help but wonder why they, who need less help but can use it more, are being left out. Their dissatisfaction with government is bound to rise as they watch the competition to gather up the funds for which they cannot qualify. And so is government dissatisfaction with itself bound to rise, for officials are asked to aid the least able and to sacrifice the more able.

The political ramifications are potentially disastrous: rising discontent on the part of both those who pay the costs and those who get the benefits. The have-littles are plunged into conflict with the have-nots (the working and lower-middle classes with the poor) because compensatory mechanisms fail to help the one, and do not stretch far enough to reach the other. Observing dissatisfaction on the part of those receiving extra resources, the people who pay are likely to call it ingratitude. Part of the secret of winning, as any football coach knows, lies in arranging an appropriate schedule. Governmental performance depends not only on the ability to solve problems but on selecting problems government knows how to solve.

WHAT are the consequences of constructing and defining issues so as to pose incompatible demands on decision-makers? Both the kinds of policies that we get from government and the kinds of attention paid to the various realms of policy are affected. Within the executive branch a greater emphasis will naturally come to be placed on foreign than on domestic policy because the foreign realm seems less forbidding to Presidents and even given a random occurrence of events it seems likely that some good can be achieved—for which, moreover, credit may accrue to the President. In domestic policy, on the other hand, Presidents have come to see little for which they will be applauded, and much for which they will be condemned for even attempting.

When a government does not expect that anything it does will garner credit it tends to push for form over substance. This comes out in the various "funny money" policies we have become accustomed to recently. An official thinks he has money for model housing—but is that not the money he should have spent three years ago and did not? Is it the money that was allocated for something else; that he thought he had but never received; that he once spent but was returned? Or is there actually a dollar or two of real money? It becomes increasingly difficult to know.

There are also substantive consequences of having incompatible demands made on government. One is a growing stress by analysts on an incomes policy as opposed to a services policy for the poor. Why should government continue to administer a welfare system that everyone hates when one of the few things that can really be done well in Washington is programming a computer to write checks? If guarded with exceptional closeness such a machine will actually write the checks it is supposed to write and people will actually receive them. In this way government does away with the middle men, the agitators for welfare rights. It may spend more money, but it will reduce the size of the bureaucracy and may actually make it possible for people to realize that the help they are getting has come from the government. Another policy consequence is revenue sharing, a bone thrown to cities and towns with a warning attached that if the bone should taste bad or if indigestion should ensue they have no one to blame but themselves. Cities are now beginning to understand that they are getting a little money and a lot of trouble. Increasingly *they* become the center of demand and lack the capacity to respond.

Making incompatible demands on government is bound to have an impact on the federal system. When there is no way to garner credit, when everything attempted is clearly slated to fail, an effort will be made by government to rid itself of the source of anxiety—namely, its responsibility for policy. Any time the federal government can trade trouble for money, it will. Miniature revenue-sharing proposals in the fields of health and welfare are now being seriously considered. The consequences, of course, need not all be bad: people with demands to make will find it more worthwhile to approach the cities and states because these will have more to give. But in a federal system in which each level deliberately seeks to pass its worst problems on to the next, in which blaming the other party has become a national pastime, it will become harder than it is already to know who is responsible for not solving our latest set of insoluble problems.

Fairly construed, the government's record on social policy during the last decade has been one of vigorous effort and some noteworthy if nevertheless defective accomplishments. Food stamps do feed the hungry (as well as the hippies), and public housing is better than its alternatives. Steps have been taken in numerous areas to meet the needs of those who had previously been neglected. The men who have contended with these confusing times deserve compassion rather than contempt, and even a measure of applause. Yet it is only now, when programs are threatened with reductions, that a chorus of concern arises—and this, from quarters that had previously denounced the nation's social programs as too little, too late, misguided, or even positively harmful. It is in any event certain that these programs will die unless those who benefit from

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them (or who identify with the beneficiaries) come forward with vocal support. The critics of social policy have overplayed their hand; they wanted more and better, instead they are getting less and worse. The Nixon administration eventually came to the concluion that since no visible credit was forthcoming from the presumptively natural supporters of social programs, it might as well gain whatever benefits it could from the conservatives who opposed them. Like any other institution that wishes to remain solvent, governmental bodies must reestablish their credit when their policies begin to earn a deficit of political support.

"GOVERNMENT," Alfred Marshall wrote, "is the most precious of human possessions; and no care can be too great to be spent on enabling it to do its work in the best way: a chief condition to that end is that it should not be set to work for which it is not specially qualified, under the conditions of time and place." Once government is given not just one or two things it cannot do, but a whole host, the effects will be felt throughout the political system. Voters, for instance, have begun to lose their sense of identification with the major political parties, because they, like the government, cannot deliver on their promises. The nature of political campaigns has also changed. In 1972, instead of defending their record, the leaders of government concentrated on the alleged horrors about to be perpetrated by the opposition—or that had been perpetrated by their own party's past. "Elect me," promised Richard Nixon in effect, "and I will save you from that fellow who created a $33 billion deficit. Elect me, and I will protect you from my Justice Department's former position on busing. Elect me, and I will save you from quotas imposed by my Department of Health, Education, and Welfare." The President was running against himself, monopolizing the advantages of incumbency while at the same time pretending he had never been in office. No doubt future challengers will learn the wisdom of being vague, lest their promises, rather than the government's performance, become the focal point of the campaign.

If parties cannot make good on the promises of their candidates for office, what can they make good on? Party structure, for one thing; they can promise to organize themselves in a given way, if only because this is something over which they can exercise control. Thus parties, like politicians, move more strongly into the realm of the expressive and the symbolic rather than of substantive policy. The Democratic party can arrange itself in order to contain certain proportions of this or that ethnic group or gender. It can conduct endless meetings, primaries, conventions, all the while gradually shifting the definition of a party from an instrument seeking to govern the nation to an instrument seeking to govern itself. What parties contribute to the nation, then, is not so much candidates attached to a policy as procedures that meet certain visible but internal norms.

Politicians, too, are shifting emphasis from substantive policy to personal political style. They talk of basic changes in the political process, but move into action only when this consists of a form of opposition. They offer adherence to proclaimed moral principle, where they cannot fail, instead of offering innovation in policy, where they cannot succeed. They are often "against" what is happening but see themselves under no obligation to suggest viable alternatives. A sign of the political times is the growing proportion of Presidential candidates who come from the United States Senate, for that is the office which combines the longest term and the highest national visibility with the least responsibility. When people are angry they may picket mayors and shout down governors, but they rarely advance on the Senate or its occupants. The Senate is the place where a man can say his piece while others worry about the responsibilities of office.

Not only the Senate but the House as well, Congress as a whole, is involved in the dilemma of acting responsibly at a time when substantive achievements are hard to come by. The quandary in which Congressmen find themselves is illustrated in the controversy over impoundment. It is all too easy to blame the conflict entirely on the President; he had ample discretionary powers under the Anti-Deficiency Act of 1951, but he chose instead to throw down the gauntlet by saying that he might refuse to spend money in appropriations bills even after they were passed over his veto. That bit of arrogance deserves what it got. But underneath the surface clash of personalities lies a deepseated unwillingness in Congress to accept responsibility for raising the revenues required to support its own spending desires. It is easier to vote for this or that while laying the burden of reduced expenditures, or of finding new revenues, at the door of the President. The growing practice of Presidential impoundment may be part of a tacit agreement that Congress will get credit for voting the funds while the President takes Congress off the hook by refusing to spend. By allowing impoundment to go on for as long as it did and to cover so extensive a range of policies, Congress demonstrated its apparent willingness to see spending cut if only the blame could be placed elsewhere.

OF ALL our institutions, the Presidency has been the one most deeply affected by government's inability to get credit for domestic policy, because it is the single most visible source of authority and hence the most obvious target of demands. Even the Watergate affair, about which it is plausible to argue that the mentality that produced

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it is of a singular kind attributable only to President Nixon and his close associates, may be seen to have connections with the fate of the Presidency as an institution in recent years. This is hardly to deny, much less to excuse, the element of personal pathology, or criminality, involved, but even so extreme a series of events as those surrounding the Watergate affair may be clarified by reference to the general issue of the impact of public policy on the Presidency in the past decade.

THE climate of opinion that made Watergate and its cover-up possible is part of (and will contribute further to) the delegitimation of government that I alluded to earlier. Although it is convenient now to forget this, from the middle 60's onward, national leaders of government have been subject to a crescendo of attack and even personal abuse. They have been shouted down, mobbed, and vilified in public. It was not possible for men like President Lyndon Johnson and Vice President Hubert Humphrey to speak where they wished in safety, or to travel where they wished without fear. Not merely their conduct as individuals, but the political system of which they were a part, has been condemned as vicious, immoral, and depraved. This, after all, was the justification offered for the stealing of government documents—that the government from which they were taken had no right to be doing what it was doing, that it was not legitimate. The rationale offered by Daniel Ellsberg for taking and publishing government documents was the same as that offered by the Watergate conspirators—national interest, a higher law than that applying to ordinary citizens.

Watergate emerged, in my opinion, out of an environment in which people who identified with government sought to delegitimate the opposition just as they believed the opposition had sought to delegitimate government. Presumably no one, in their view, had a right to beat President Nixon in 1972, so they sought to get Senator Muskie out of the race.* They broke into Watergate ostensibly to find evidence that the Democrats were being financed by Cuban (Communist) money, as if to say that their own illegality was permissible because the Democrats were not then a legitimate American political party. The blame, to be sure, is not the same. Ellsberg was not entrusted with the care of government, and the Watergate conspirators were. But they cohere in the same syndrome; the one is a reaction to the other, each party rationalizing its exceptional behavior on the grounds of its enemy's illegitimacy.

Watergate is a curious scandal by American standards, in that it is not concerned with money; nor is it, like a British scandal, concerned with sex. By contrast, it resembles a French scandal, one in which small groups of conspirators make and execute their clandestine plans in the service of ideologies held by no more than 1 or 2 per cent of the population. Watergate may thus represent another step in the "Frenchification" of American political life begun in the mid-1960's, a mode of politics in which apparently inexplicable behavior is found to derive from attachment to ideologies of which the vast bulk of the citizenry knows little and cares less. We may have to accustom ourselves to men on the Left out to save us from Fascism and men on the Right from Communism, men who point to one another's activities as justification for illegal acts.

The French analogy gains strength in light of the entire pattern of President Nixon's conduct before Watergate. Seemingly disparate occurrences fall into place once we understand that Nixon had adopted a plebiscitary view of the Presidency, a view that has echoes in the American past but none in the contemporary Western world except in the Presidency of Charles de Gaulle and his successor in France. From this perspective the position of Nixon's Attorney General on executive privilege, with its suggestion that the Presidency exists wholly apart from other institutions, becomes more explicable. So does Nixon's march on the media. For if the Presidency is not part of a separation of powers with Congress, but of a unity of power with the people, then its survival is critically dependent on direct access to them. His victory at the polls in 1972 seems to have inspired in him the conviction that as the embodiment of the national will he should brook no opposition from Congress. If he said "no" on spending and the legislature said "yes," so much the worse for *it*. Even the Republican party could not share in his triumph—it neither ran his campaign nor got any of its leaders appointed to high positions—lest it become another unwanted intermediary between the President and the people; Vice President Agnew and the Republican National Committee owe their spotless reputations on Watergate (apart from their undoubted integrity) to having been kept out of (or away from) the Presidential branch of government. It was his plebiscitary view of the Presidency that led Nixon to attempt to run a foreign and defense policy without the Senate, a budget policy without the House, and a domestic-security policy without the courts.†

I have momentarily digressed on the subject of Watergate only to suggest that there was more than personal idiosyncrasy at work here, and that

* I pass over the intriguing question of what lesson the Democratic party might learn when its worst enemies conspire to nominate the candidate it was bent on selecting itself.

† Nixon did not have these views when he came into office. It was his experience in office that led him to such desperate expedients. No doubt each man comes bringing his own desperation with him. But Nixon was already President. To go so far after four years in office he must have been more frustrated than anyone knew.

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there is reason to look upon Nixon's Presidency as the continuation and exemplification of a number of long-term trends in the political system as a whole. In like fashion, the organization of the executive office under Nixon continues an ever-growing trend toward bureaucratization, a reaction in turn to the perceived failure of the Presidential office to influence public policy in ways that will redound to its credit. And just as President Kennedy's and President Johnson's associates sought to lay the blame for bad public policy on the regular bureaucracy, so Nixon's men were following precedent when they sought to debureaucratize the bureaucracy while themselves becoming more bureaucratic. For bureaucratization is a way of seeking shelter from a stormy world.

The Presidential office has, as everybody can now see, become a bureaucracy in the same sense that Max Weber meant by the term: it has grown greatly in size and it is characterized by specialization, division of labor, chain of command, and hierarchy. At the same time it criticizes, castigates, and blames the regular federal bureaucracy and attempts to circumvent it and intervene directly in the political process at lower and lower levels. From the perhaps three secretaries that Franklin Roosevelt inherited, the executive bureaucracy has risen to several thousand. There are (or recently were) two specialized organizations for dealing with the media, one to handle daily press relations and the other concerned with various promotional ventures. There is a specialized bureaucracy for dealing with foreign policy, begun when John F. Kennedy appointed McGeorge Bundy to the White House; Henry Kissinger's shop now boasts a staff of about one hundred. There is a domestic council to deal with policy at home, started by Richard Nixon. And there is also the Congressional liaison machinery instituted by President Eisenhower. Since 1965 the growth of the executive office of the President has been geometric. The largest increases of all occurred in Nixon's first term, but he was merely accelerating a trend, not initiating it.

Because President Nixon, especially at the start of his second term, apparently set out to alienate every national elite—the press, Congress, the Republican National Committee—the fact that he had long been attacking his own federal bureaucracy has escaped notice. Such incidents abound, however. At ceremonies establishing the special Action Office for Drug Abuse Control, for example: ". . . the President told an audience of 150 legislators and officials that 'heads would roll' if 'petty bureaucrats' obstruct the efforts of the office's director, Dr. Jerome H. Jaffe. . . . The President said that above all the law he just signed put into the hands of Dr. Jaffe full authority to 'knock heads together' and prevent 'empire building' by any one of the many agencies concerned" (New York *Times*, March 22, 1972). President Nixon also "informed a group of Western editors in Portland that he had told Secretary Morton 'we should take a look at the whole bureaucracy with regard to the handling of Indian affairs and shake it up good.' The President blamed the bureaucracy for Indian problems, saying that 'the bureaucracy feeds on itself, defends itself, and fights for the status quo. And does very little, in my opinion, for progress in the field'" (New York *Times*, September 29, 1971).

Here too, Nixon was not so much initiating as continuing a trend. Much the same hostility to the bureaucracy had been manifested by his immediate predecessors. Accounts of staff men under Johnson and Kennedy frequently reveal a sense of indignation, if not outrage, at the very idea of the separation of powers; federalism is an anathema to agents of the executive branch. Who are all those people out there thwarting us? they ask all but explicitly. Who do they think they are in the Congress and the state capitals? Strongest of all is the condemnation of the bureaucracy. The White House staff has great ideas, marvelous impulses, beautiful feelings, and these are suppressed, oppressed, crushed by the bureaucratic mind.

Why is it that the President on the one hand seeks to bureaucratize his own office, while on the other hand he holds the bureaucracy to blame for all his ills? In the end we return to our beginnings. Presidents have been impelled to attempt stabilization of their own office and destabilization of the regular bureaucracy because of radical changes in public policy demands. The structure of domestic political issues is now such that no government, and hence no President, can get the credit for what is done. Like all the other actors in this drama the President and his men head for cover in the White House stockade and shoot at others more vulnerable than themselves.

It would appear amazing, in retrospect, that we thought about the Presidency as if it were uncaused, as if the things that affected and afflicted us as citizens had no impact on the men who occupy public office. How long did we expect attacks on the man and the institution to go on before there was a response? Nixon's counter-attack, it now appears, may have threatened our liberties. Did the growing popularity of the idea that illegality was permissible for a good cause have no impact on the men surrounding the President? Did this political peril have nothing to do with the demands we make on our Presidents but only with their designs on us? John F. Kennedy struggled mightily with a sense of failure before he was assassinated. Lyndon B. Johnson was forced to deny himself the chance for reelection. Now Richard Nixon fights for a chance to serve out his term. One or two more experiences like these and someone may think it is more than coincidence.

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IT MIGHT be argued that my portrait of the Presidential office in particular, and of politicians in general, treats public officials as if they were the innocent victims of social pressures rather than active participants in the political process capable of shaping it to their own ends. Politicians, moreover, have faced conflicting demands in the past, and might reasonably be expected to face them successfully in the future. Problems arising from incompatible goals are what leaders are there to help solve. A purpose of leadership, after all, is to clarify what can and cannot be done, to set priorities, and to gain some agreement on a schedule of accomplishment. Is this too much to ask of a politician who wants to make a career out of leadership?

It is not. My thesis, however, is that the problems being allocated to government are not just a random sample of those ordinarily associated with governing, some of which, at least, are eminently soluble, given hard work and good judgment, but that government is increasingly getting a skewed distribution of problems that are insoluble precisely because people demand of government what government cannot do. What remains to be explained is how politicians have become strapped to this particular wheel and why they are so maladroit in getting off it.

Politicians are Americans and they, too, are caught up in American optimism. Just as the Vietnam war was a symptom of the optimistic belief in the boundless possibilities of American intervention abroad, so, too, the War on Poverty was a symptom of an optimistic belief in the boundless possibilities of government intervention at home. By the time public officials began to realize they could not do everything all at once, or even some things at all, they had become committed to a broad new range of social programs. And they did not call a halt to these indecisive engagements because they were liberals, that is, Americans.

AMERICA lacks an intellectually respectable conservative tradition. It has always, as Louis Hartz has sought to show, had a liberal tradition. For present purposes this means that equality, no matter how abused or disused, has always been the prevailing American norm; the long tradition of hypocrisy on the issue is itself eloquent testimony to its power. The new social and political programs, whether designed for increased participation in decision-making or a greater share in the good things of life, came into the world bearing the banner of the liberal concept of equality. It was hard to oppose, or even think clearly about opposing, these programs without appearing to be against equality or in favor of inequality. Individual politicians might have doubts, a few deviants might voice them, but there was too much guilt engendered by the rhetoric of equality to make collective action possible.

After the deed comes the rationalization. John Rawls's distinguished book on equality, *A Theory of Justice*, though long in the making, appears now as a gloss on the domestic programs of the 1960's. Its guiding principle is that no inequality is justified unless it helps those who are worst off. Armed with this communitarian thrust to liberal principle, one can defend any sort of policy which proclaims its purpose as that of aiding the worst off but which does not bother to balance smaller benefits to some against larger benefits to others. A few pundits aside, there is not now, if there ever was, a social stratum able to support a conservative ethic against the forces in favor of pushing public policy over the egalitarian precipice. Under the Nixon administration, instead of a social response we got a pitiful outbreak (or break-in) like Watergate.

The American politician, like the American political system, has been attacked at the most vulnerable point. The system is being asked to make good on its most ancient and deeply-held beliefs, and it hovers between an inability to abandon its faith and an inability to make its faith manifest to the believers. This is the American crisis of confidence, evident in professors who do not profess, scientists who call for alternative approaches to science that smack of witchcraft, and politicians who condemn politics.

The expectations created by the body politic (or by a small but influential part of it), the rewards and punishments it administers, go far to shape the successes and failures of public officials. Anyone who writes or speaks or thinks seriously about public policy has a special obligation to consider what his contribution, even when placed in the context of many others, implies for the ability of government to perform adequately. Otherwise, private vices will become public vices as well (to reverse Mandeville), and government, seeing that the game is rigged, will respond once again by secretly attempting to change the rules.

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Mrs. Virginia Woolf

Cynthia Ozick

NO RECENT biography has been read more thirstily by readers and writers of fiction than Quentin Bell's account of the life of his aunt Virginia.* Reviewing it, Elizabeth Hardwick speaks of "the present exhaustion of Virginia Woolf," and compares the idea of Bloomsbury—it "wearies"—to a pond run out of trout. But for most American writers, bewildered by the instability of what passes for culture and literature, envious of the English sense of place and of being placed, conscious of separations that yet lack the respectability of "schools" or even the interest of alien perspectives, stuck mainly with the crudity of being either For or Against Interpretation, the legend of Bloomsbury still retains its inspiriting powers. Like any Golden Age, it promises a mimetic future: some day again, says Bloomsbury of 1905, there will be friends, there will be conversation, there will be moods, and they will all again *really matter,* and fall naturally, in the way of things that matter, into history.

Part of the special history of the Bloomsbury of mood is pictorial—and this has nothing to do with the art critic Roger Fry, or the painter Duncan Grant. It is not what the painters painted or what the writers wrote about painting that hangs on: it is the photographs, most of them no more official than snapshots, of the side of a house, two people playing checkers on an old kitchen chair set out in the yard, three friends and a baby poking in the sand. The snapshots are all amateur. Goblets of brightness wink on eaves, fences, trees, and wash out faces in their dazzle; eyes are lost in blackened sockets. The hem of a dress is likely to be all clarity, but the heads escape—under hat brims, behind dogs, into mottled leaf-shade. And out of the blur of those hopeless poses, cigarettes, hands on knees, hands over books, anxious little pups held up to the camera, walking-sticks, long grotesque nose-shadows, lapels, outdoor chairs and tables, there rises up—no, leaks down—so much tension, so much ambition, so much fake casualness—so much heartbreaking attention to the momentariness of the moment. The people in the snapshots knew, in a way we do not, who they were. Bloomsbury was self-conscious in a way we are not. It sniffed at its own perceptions, even its own perceived posterity. Somewhere early in the course of her diaries, Virginia Woolf notes how difficult it would be for a biographer to understand her—how little biographers can know, she said—only from the evidence of her journals. Disbelieving in the probity of her own biography, she did not doubt that she would have her own biographer.

She did not doubt; she knew; they knew. Hatched from the last years of the reign of Victoria, Bloomsbury was still a world where things—if not people, then ideas—could be said to reign. Though old authority might be sneered at (or something worse even than a sneer—Virginia Woolf declared her certainty that she could not have become a writer had her father lived), though proprieties might be outrageously altered ("Semen?" asked Lytton Strachey, noticing a stain on Vanessa Bell's skirt one afternoon), though sex was accessible and often enough homoerotic, though freedom might be proclaimed on Gordon Square, though livings were earned, there was nonetheless a spine of authority to support Bloomsbury: family, descent, class and community—the sense of having-in-common. Bloomsbury, after all, was an inheritance. Both E. M. Forster's and Virginia Woolf's people were associated with the liberal and intellectual Clapham Sect of the century before. Cambridge made a kind of cousinship—the staircase at Trinity which drew together Clive Bell, Saxon Sydney-Turner, and Virginia Woolf's brother Thoby Stephen, was the real beginning of the gatherings at Gordon Square.

Bloomsbury was pacifist and busy with gossip about what it always called "buggery," but it was not radical and it did not harbor rebels. Rebels want to make over; the Bloomsburyites reinforced themselves with their like. The staircase at Trinity went on and on for the rest of their lives, and even Virginia Woolf, thinking to make over the form of the novel, had to have each newly completed work ratified by Morgan Forster and sometimes Maynard Keynes before she could breathe at ease again. The authority of one's closest familiars is the unmistakable note of Bloomsbury. It was that sure voice she listened for. "Virginia Woolf

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* *Virginia Woolf: A Biography,* by Quentin Bell, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Vol. I, 216 pp., Vol. II, 314 pp., $12.50.

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was a Miss Stephen," Quentin Bell begins, in the same voice; it is an opening any outsider could have written, but not in that sharp cadence. He is not so much biographer as a later member of the circle—Virginia Woolf's sister's son, the child of Vanessa and Clive Bell. He knows, he does not doubt. It is the note of self-recognition; of confidence; of inheritance. Everything is in his grip.

And yet—as she predicted—Virginia Woolf's biographer fails her. He fails her, in fact, more mournfully than any outsider could. It is his grip that fails her. This is not only because, sticking mainly to those matters he has sure authority over, he has chosen to omit a literary discussion of the body of work itself. "I have found the work of the biographer sufficiently difficult without adventuring in other directions," he tells us, so that to speak of Quentin Bell's "sure authority" is not to insinuate that all his data are, perhaps, out of childhood memory or family reminiscence, or that he has not mined library after library, and collection after collection of unpublished papers. He is, after all, of the next generation, and the next generation is always in some fashion an outsider to the one before. But what *is* in his grip is something more precise, curiously, than merely data, which the most impersonal research can reliably throw up: it is that particular intimacy of perspective—of experience, really—which characterizes not family information, but family bias. Every house has its own special odor to the entering guest, however faint—it sticks to the inhabitants, it is in their chairs and in their clothes. The analogy of bias to scent is chiefly in one's unconsciousness of one's own. Bell's Woolf is about Virginia, but it has the smell of Vanessa's house. The Virginia Woolf that comes off these pages is a kind of emanation of a point of view, long settled, by now, into family feeling. Stephens, Pattles, Fishers—all the family lines—each has its distinct and legendary scent. The Stephens are bold, the Pattles are fair, the Fishers are self-righteous. And Virginia is mad.

She was the family's third case of insanity, all on the Stephen side. Leslie Stephen, Virginia Woolf's celebrated father—a man of letters whose career was marked not least by the circumstance that Henry James cherished him—was married twice, the second time to Julia Duckworth, a widow with children. Together they produced Vanessa and Virginia, Thoby and Adrian. A child of Leslie Stephen's first marriage, the younger of Virginia's two half-sisters, was born defective—it is not clear whether backward or truly insane—and was confined to an asylum, where she died old. Virginia's first cousin—the child of her father's brother—went mad while still a young man, having struck his head in an accident. But one wonders, in the retrograde and rather primitive way one contemplates families, whether there might not have been a Stephen "taint." In a family already accustomed to rumor of aberration, Virginia Woolf, in any case, was incontrovertibly mad. Her madness was distinguished, moreover, by a threatening periodicity: at any moment it could strike, disabling everyone around her. Vanessa had to leave her children and come running, nurses had to be hired, rest homes interviewed, transport accomplished. The disaster was ten times wider than its victim.

And just here is the defect in writing out of family authority. The odor is personal, hence partial. Proust says somewhere that the artist brings to the work his whole self, to his familiars only those aspects that accommodate them. The biographer close to his subject has the same difficulty; the aspect under which Quentin Bell chiefly views his aunt Virginia is not of accommodation but of a still narrower partiality: discommodity, the effect on family perspective of Virginia Woolf's terrible and recurrent insanity. It was no mere melancholia, or poetic mooning—as, reading Leonard Woolf's deliberately truncated edition of her diary, we used to guess. A claustrophilic though inspired (also self-inspiring) document, it made us resent the arbitrary "personal" omissions: was it the madness he was leaving out? Certainly we wanted the madness too, supposing it to be the useful artistic sort: grotesque moods, quirks—epiphanies really, But it was not that; it was the usual thing people get put away for, an insanity characterized by incoherent howling and by violence. She clawed her attendants and had to be restrained; she would not touch food; she was suicidal. Ah, that cutting difference: not that she longed for death, as poets and writers sometimes do for melancholy's sake, but that she wanted, with the immediacy of a method, to be dead.

BELL's Woolf, then, is not about the Virginia Woolf of the diaries, essays, and novels—not, in the Proustian sense, about the writer's whole self. And surely this is not simply because literary criticism is evaded. Bell's Woolf is not about a writer, in fact; it is about the smell of a house. It is about a madwoman and her nurse.

The nurse was Leonard Woolf. Upon him Quentin Bell can impose no family aspects, rumors, characteristics, old experience, inherited style. He does not trail any known house-scent, like Stephens, Pattles, Fishers. Though he shared the Cambridge stairs—Thoby Stephen, Saxon Sydney-Turner, Clive Bell, Lytton Strachey, and Leonard Woolf together briefly formed the Midnight Society, a reading club which met on Saturday evenings in Clive Bell's rooms—he was not an inheritor of Cambridge. Cambridge was not natural to him, Bloomsbury was not natural to him, even England was not natural to him—not as an inheritance; he was a Jew. Quentin Bell has no "authority" over Leonard Woolf, as he has over his aunt; Leonard is nowhere in the biographer's grip.

The effect is unexpected. It is as if Virginia

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Woolf escapes—possessing her too selectively, the biographer lets her slip—but Leonard Woolf somehow stays to become himself. Which is to say, Bell's Virginia Woolf can be augmented from a thousand other sources—chiefly from her own work—but we learn as much about Leonard Woolf here as we are likely to know from any other source. And what we learn is a strange historical judgment—strange, but unfragmented, of a convincing wholeness: that Leonard Woolf was a family sacrifice. Without him—Quentin Bell's clarity on this point is ineffaceable—Virginia Woolf might have spent her life in a mental asylum. The elder Stephens were dead, Thoby had died at twenty-six, Adrian married a woman apparently indifferent to or incompatible with the Bloomsburyites; it was Vanessa on whom the grimness fell. Leonard Woolf—all this is blatant—got Vanessa off the hook. He was, in fact, deceived: he had no inkling he was being captured for a nurse.

> Neither Vanessa nor Adrian gave him a detailed and explicit account of Virginia's illnesses or told him how deadly serious they might be. . . . Her insanity was clothed, like some other painful things in that family, in a jest. . . . Thus, in effect if not in intention, Leonard was allowed to think of Virginia's illnesses as something not desperately serious, and he was allowed to marry her without knowing how fearful a care such a union might be. In fairness to all parties it must be said that, even if Virginia's brother and sister had been as explicit and circumstantial as they ought to have been, Leonard would certainly not have been deflected from his purpose of marrying Virginia. . . . As it was, he learnt the hard way and one can only wonder, seeing how hard it was, and that he had for so long to endure the constant threat of her suicide, to exert constant vigilance, to exercise endless persuasive tact at mealtimes and to suffer the perpetual alterations of hope and disappointment, that he too did not go mad.
>
> In fact he nearly did, although he does not mention it.

"He does not mention it." There was in Leonard Woolf an extraordinary silence, a containment allied to something like concealment, and at the same time open to a methodical candor. This is no paradox; candor is often the mode of the obtuse person. It is of course perilous to think of Leonard Woolf as obtuse: he was both activist and intellectual, worldly and introspective; his intelligence, traveling widely and serenely over politics and literature, was reined in by a seriousness that makes him the most responsible and conscientious figure among all the Bloomsburyites. His seriousness was profound. It was what turned a hand press "small enough to stand on a kitchen table" into the Hogarth Press, an important and innovative publishing house. It was what turned Leonard Woolf himself from a highly able agent of colonialism—at the age of twenty-four he was an official of the British ruling apparatus in Ceylon—into a convinced anti-imperialist and a fervent socialist. And it was what turned the Jew into an Englishman.

Not that Leonard Woolf is altogether without ambivalence on this question; indeed, the word "ambivalence" is his own. Soon after his marriage to Virginia Stephen, he was taken round on a tour of Stephen relations—among them Virginia's half-brother, Sir George Duckworth, in his large house in Dalingridge Place, and "Aunt Anny," who was Lady Ritchie, Thackeray's daughter, in St. George's Square. He suffered in these encounters from an "ambivalence in my attitude to the society which I found in Dalingridge Place and St. George's Square. I disliked its respectability and assumptions while envying and fearing its assurance and manners." And: "I was an outsider to this class, because, although I and my father before me belonged to the professional middle class, we had only recently struggled up into it from the stratum of Jewish shopkeepers. We had no roots in it." This looks like candor—"we had no roots"—but it is also remarkably insensible. Aware of his not belonging, he gives no evidence anywhere that the people he moved among were also aware of it.

It is true that his own group of self-consciously agnostic Cambridge intellectuals apparently never mentioned it to his face. Thoby Stephen in a letter to Leonard in Ceylon is quick enough to speak of himself, mockingly, as a nonbelieving Christian—"it's no good being dainty with Christians and chapel's obviously rot"—but no one seems ever to have teased Leonard about his being an agnostic Jew. In the atmosphere of that society, perhaps, teasing would have too dangerously resembled baiting; levity about being a Christian was clearly not interchangeable with levity about being a Jew. Fair enough: it never is. But Virginia, replying to a letter in which Leonard implores her to love him, is oddly analytical: ". . . of course, I feel angry sometimes at the strength of your desire. Possibly, your being a Jew comes in also at this point. You seem so foreign." Was he, like all those dark lubricious peoples whose origins are remote from the moderating North, too obscurely other? She corrects herself at once, with a kind of apology: "And then I am fearfully unstable. I pass from hot to cold in an instant, without any reason; except that I believe sheer physical effort and exhaustion influence me." The correction—the retraction—is weak, and fades off; what remains is the blow: "You seem so foreign."

We do not know Leonard's response to this. Possibly he made none. It would have been in keeping had he made none. Foreignness disconcerted him—like Virginia he was at moments disturbed by it and backed away—and if his own origins were almost never mentioned to his face, his face was nevertheless *there*, and so, in those striking old photographs, were the faces of his grandpar-

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ents. Leonard Woolf is bemused in his autobiography by his paternal grandfather, "a large, stern, black-haired, and black-whiskered, rabbinical Jew in a frock coat." Again he speaks of this "look of stern rabbinical orthodoxy," and rather prefers the "round, pink face of an incredible old Dutch doll," which was the face of his Holland-born maternal grandmother—of whom he speculates that it was "possible that she had a great deal of non-Jewish blood in her ancestry. Some of her children and grandchildren were fair-haired and facially very unlike the 'typical' Jew." Her husband, however, was a different case: "No one could have mistaken him for anything but a Jew. Although he wore coats and trousers, hats and umbrellas, just like those of all the other gentlemen in Addison Gardens, he looked to me as if he might have stepped straight out of one of those old pictures of caftaned, bearded Jews in a ghetto. . . ." Such Jews, he notes, were equipped with a "fragment of spiritual steel, a particle of passive and unconquerable resistance," but otherwise the character, and certainly the history, of the Jews do not draw him. "My father's father was a Jew," he writes, exempting himself by two generations. "I have always felt in my bones and brain and heart English and, more narrowly, a Londoner, but with a nostalgic love of the city and civilization of ancient Athens." He recognizes that his "genes and chromosomes" are something else; he is a "descendant" of "the world's official fugitives and scapegoats."

But a "descendant" is not the same as a member. A descendant shares an origin, but not necessarily a destiny. Writing in his eighties, Leonard Woolf recollects that as a schoolboy he was elected to an exclusive debating society under the thumb of G. K. Chesterton and his brother, and "in view of the subsequent violent anti-Semitism of the Chestertons" he finds this "amusing"; he reports that he was "surprised and flattered." Sixty-three years afterward he is still flattered. His description of the public school that flattered him shows it to be a detestable place, hostile both to intellect and feeling: "I got on quite well with the boys in my form or with whom I played cricket, football, and fives, but it would have been unsafe, practically impossible, to let them know what I really thought or felt about anything which seemed to me important." *Would have been unsafe.* It was a risk he did not take—unlike Morgan Forster, who, in the same situation in a similar school, allowed himself to be recognized as an intellectual and consequently to suffer as a schoolboy pariah. Leonard Woolf did not intend to take on the role of pariah, then or later. Perhaps it was cowardice; or perhaps it was the opposite, that "fragment of spiritual steel" he had inherited from the ghetto; or perhaps it was his sense of himself as exempt from the ghetto.

Certainly he always thought of himself as wholly an Englishman. In the spring of 1935 he and Virginia drove to Rome. "I was astonished then (I am still astonished)," Quentin Bell comments, "that Leonard chose to travel by way of Germany." They were on German soil three days; near Bonn they encountered a Nazi demonstration, but were unharmed, and entered Italy safely. What prompted Leonard Woolf to go into Germany in the very hour Jews were being abused there? Did he expect Nazi street hoodlums to distinguish between an English Jewish face and a German Jewish face? He carried with him—it was not needed, and in the event of street hoodlumism would anyhow have been useless—a protective letter from an official of the German Embassy in London. More than that, he carried—"in his bones and brain and heart"—the designation of Englishman. It was a test, not of the inherited fragment of spiritual steel, but of the strength of his exemption from that heritage. If Quentin Bell is twice astonished, it may be because he calculated the risk more closely than Leonard; or else he is not quite so persuaded of the Englishness of Leonard Woolf as is Leonard Woolf.

And, superficially at least, it is difficult to be persuaded of it. One is drawn to Leonard's face much as he was drawn to his grandfather's face, and the conclusion is the same. What Leonard's eyes saw was what the eyes of the educated English classes saw. What Leonard felt on viewing his grandfather's face must have been precisely what Clive Bell and Thoby Stephen would have felt. There is an arresting snapshot—still another of those that make up the pictorial history of Bloomsbury—of Leonard Woolf and Adrian Stephen. They are both young men in their prime; the date is 1914. They are standing side by side before the high narrow Gothic-style windows of Asham House, the Sussex villa Leonard and Virginia Woolf owned for some years. They are dressed identically (vests, coats, ties) and positioned identically—feet apart, hands in pockets, shut lips gripping pipe or cigarette holder. Their shoes are lost in the weedy grass, and the sunlight masks their faces in identical skull-shadows. Both faces are serene, holding back amusement, indulgent of the photographer. And still it is not a picture of two cultivated Englishmen, or not only that. Adrian is incredibly tall and Vikinglike, with a forehead as broad and flat as a chimney-tile; he looks like some blueblood American banker not long out of Princeton; his hair grows straight up like thick pale straw. Leonard's forehead is an attenuated wafer under a tender black forelock, his nose is nervous and frail, he seems younger and more vulnerable than his years (he was then thirty-four) and as recognizably intellectual as—well, how does one put the contrast? Following Leonard, one ought to dare to put it with the clarity of a certain cultural bluntness: he looks like a student at the yeshiva. Leonard has the unmistakable face of a Jew. Like his grandfather—and, again like him, despite his costume—Leonard

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Woolf might have stepped out of one of those pictures of caftaned Jews in the ghetto.

The observation may be obvious and boring but it is not insignificant, if only because it is derived from Leonard himself; it is his own lesson. What can be learned from it is not merely that he was himself conscious of all that curious contrast, but that his fellows could not have been indifferent to it. In a 1968 review of the penultimate volume of Leonard Woolf's memoirs, Dan Jacobson wonders, "Did his being a Jew never affect ... his career or social life in the several years he spent as a colonial officer in Ceylon, his only companions during that time being other colonial civil servants—not in general the most enlightened, tolerant, or tactful of British social groups? Did it not arise in the political work he carried out later in England, especially during the rise of Nazism?"* On all these matters Leonard is mute; he does not mention it. Not so Virginia. "He is a penniless Jew," she wrote in a letter to a friend announcing her marriage, and we know that if she had married a poor man of her own set she would not have called him a penniless Englishman. She called Leonard a Jew not to identify or explain him, but because, quite simply, that is how she saw him; it was herself she was explaining. And if she wrote lightheartedly, making a joke of marriage without inheritance, it was also a joke in general about unaccoutered Jews—from her point of view, Leonard had neither inheritance nor heritage. He was—like the Hogarth Press later on—self-created.

Of course, in thinking about Leonard Woolf, one is plainly not interested in the question of the acculturated Jew ("... nearly all Jews are both proud and ashamed of being Jews," Leonard writes—a model of the type); it is not on the mark. What *is* to the point is the attitude of the class Leonard aspired to join. "Virginia for her part," Quentin Bell notes—and it is unnecessary to remind oneself that he is her nephew—"had to meet the Woolf family."

> It was a daunting experience. Leonard himself was sufficiently Jewish to seem to her disquietingly foreign; but in him the trait was qualified. He had become so very much a citizen of her world. . . . But Leonard's widowed mother, a matriarchal figure living with her large family in Colinette Road, Putney, seemed very alien to Virginia. No place could have been less like home than her future mother-in-law's house.
>
> And how did the Woolfs regard her? Did they perceive that she thought their furniture hideous? Did she seem to them a haughty goy thinking herself too good for the family of their brilliant son? I am afraid that they probably did.
>
> [Here follows an account of Virginia's response—aloof and truculent—upon learning the character of the dietary laws, which Mrs. Woolf observed.]

Virginia was ready to allow that Mrs. Woolf had some very good qualities, but her heart must have sunk as she considered what large opportunities she would have for discovering them.

"Work and love and Jews in Putney take it out of me," she wrote, and it was certainly true.

This aspect of Virginia Stephen's marriage to Leonard Woolf is usually passed over in silence. I have rehearsed it here at such length not to emphasize it for its own sake—there is nothing novel about upper-class English distaste for Jews—but to make a point about Leonard. He is commonly depicted as, in public, a saintly socialist, and, in private, a saintly husband. He was probably both; but he also knew, like any percipient young man in love with a certain segment of society, how to seize vantage ground. As a schoolboy he was no doubt sincerely exhilarated by the playing field, but he hid his intellectual exhilarations to make it look as if the playing field were all there was to esteem; it was a way, after all, of buying esteem for himself. And though he was afterward no doubt sincerely in love with Virginia Stephen (surely a woman less intelligent would not have satisfied him), it would be a mistake to suppose that Virginia herself—even given her brilliance, her splendid head on its splendid neck, the radiance of her first appearance in Thoby's rooms in Cambridge wearing a white dress and round hat and carrying a parasol, astonishing him, Leonard says, as when "in a picture gallery you suddenly come face to face with a great Rembrandt or Velásquez"—it would be ingenuous, not to say credulous, to think that Virginia alone was all there was to adore. Whether Leonard Woolf fell in love with a young woman of beauty and intellect, or more narrowly with a Stephen of beauty and intellect, will always be a formidable, and a necessary, question.

It is a question which, it seems to me, touches acutely on Leonard Woolf in his profoundly dedicated role as nurse. He was dedicated partly because he was earnestly efficient at everything, and also because he loved his wife, and also because he was a realist who could reconcile himself to any unlooked-for disaster. He came to the situation of Virginia's health determinedly and unquestioningly, much as, years later, when the German bombings had begun, he joined up with the Local Defense Volunteers: it was what had to be done. But in the case of Virginia more than merely courage was at issue; his "background" had equipped him well to be Virginia Stephen's nurse. When things were going badly he could take on the burden of all those small code-jottings in his diary—'V.n.w.," "b.n.," "V.sl.h."—and all the crises "Virginia not well," "bad night," "Virginia slight headache" horrendously implied, for the simple reason that it was worth it to him. It was worth it because she was a genius; it was worth it because she was a Stephen.

* Commentary, March 1968.

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THE power and allure of the Stephen world, of course, lay not in its distance from the Jews of Putney—Bloomsbury was anyhow hardly likely to notice the Jews of Putney, and if Virginia did notice, and was even brought to tea there, it was through the abnormal caprice of a freakish fate—but in its illustriousness. Virginia was an illustrious young woman: had she had no gift of her own, the luster of her father's situation, and of the great circle of the aristocracy of intellect into which she was born, would have marked her life. It was additionally marked by her double fortune of genius and insanity, and though her primary fortune—the circle into which she was born—attracted, in the most natural way, other members of that circle, the biting and always original quality of her mind put the less vivid of them off.

Her madness was not public knowledge, but her intellect could not be hidden. Her tongue had a fearful and cutting brilliance. "I was surprised to find how friendly she made herself appear," said Walter Lamb, another of Thoby Stephen's Cambridge friends, amazed on one occasion to have been undevoured. He courted her for a time, pallidly, asking frightened questions: "Do you want to have children and love in the normal way?"—as if he expected nothing usual from Virginia Stephen. "I wish," she wrote to Lytton Strachey, after reporting Lamb's visits, "that earth would open her womb and let some new creature out." The courtship was brief and ended in boredom. Lamb had offered her what was one of at least four proposals of marriage from differing sources; Strachey himself had tendered her one. Since he preferred stable boys to women, a fact which they both understood very well, it was a strange mistake. Sydney Waterlow, still another Cambridge name, was a suitor; she regarded him as "amiable." Hilton Young, a childhood friend—cast, says Quentin Bell, from a "smooth and well-proportioned mold"—might have been an appropriate match, mixing politics with poetry and gaining a peerage; he was merely "admirable." Meanwhile Virginia was thoughtfully flirting with her sister's husband. At twenty-nine, despite all these attentions, she was depressed at being still unmarried; she was despondent, as she would be for the rest of her life, over her childlessness. Not one of those triflings had turned to infatuation, on either side.

It was fortunate. There was lacking, in all these very intelligent men, and indeed in their type in general, the kind of sexual seriousness that is usually disparaged as uxoriousness. It was a trait which Leonard invincibly possessed and which Clive Bell despised as "provincial and puritanical, an enemy to all that was charming and amusing in life." Clive was occupied by a long-standing affair and lived apart from Vanessa, who, at various times, lived with Roger Fry and with Duncan Grant—who was (so closely was this group tied) Lytton Strachey's cousin, and who may have been (so Quentin Bell allows us to conjecture) the father of Quentin's sister Angelica. Vanessa typed and distributed copies of Lytton Strachey's indecent verse; once at a party she did a topless dance; it was legendary that she had at another party fornicated with Maynard Keynes "*coram publico*"—the whole room looking on. It may have been in honor of these last two occasions that Virginia Woolf, according to Quentin Bell, pronounced human nature to have been "changed in or about December 1910."

It was not a change Leonard Woolf approved of. Four years after this crucial date in human history he published a novel critical of "unnatural cultured persons" given to "wild exaggerated talk" and frivolous behavior; it was clearly an assault on Vanessa and Clive Bell and their circle. The novel, called *The Wise Virgins*, was about *not* marrying Virginia. Instead the hero is forced to marry a Putney girl, and lives unhappily ever after—only because, having been infected with Bloomsbury's licentious notions, he has carelessly gotten her with child. The fictional Leonard loses the heroine who represents Virginia, and is doomed to the drabness of Putney; in the one act he both deplores Bloomsbury and laments his deprivation of it. The real Leonard tried to pick his way between these soul-cracking contradictions. He meant to have the high excitement of Bloomsbury—and certainly "frivolity" contributed to Bloomsbury's dash and éclat—without the frivolity itself. He meant to be master of the full brilliant breadth of all that worldliness, and at the same time of the more sober and limiting range of his native seriousness.

That he coveted the one while requiring the other was—certainly in her biographer's eyes—the salvation of Virginia. No one else in that milieu could have survived—surely not as husband—her illnesses. Roger Fry, for instance, put his own mad wife away and went to live with Vanessa. As for Lamb, Waterlow, Young—viewed in the light of what Virginia Woolf's insanity extracted from her caretaker, their possibilities wither. Of all her potential husbands, only Leonard Woolf emerged as fit. And the opposite too can be said: of Bloomsbury's potential wives, only Virginia emerged as fit for Leonard.

He was fit for her because her madness, especially in combination with her innovative genius, demanded the most grave, minutely persevering and attentive service. She was fit for him not simply because she represented Bloomsbury in its most resplendent flowering of originality and luminousness; so, after all, did Vanessa, an accomplished painter active with other painters in the revolutionary vitality of the Post-Impressionists. But as no marriage could survive Vanessa for long, so Leonard married to Vanessa would not have survived Bloomsbury for long. What Leonard needed in Virginia was not so much her genius as her madness. It made possible for him the exercise

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of the one thing Bloomsbury had no use for: uxoriousness. It allowed him the totality of his seriousness unchecked. It *used* his seriousness, it gave it legitimate occupation, it made it both necessary and awesome. And it made *her* serious. Without the omnipresent threat of disintegration, freed from the oppression of continuous vigil against breakdown, what might Virginia's life have been? The flirtation with Clive hints at it: she might have lived, at least outwardly, like Vanessa. It was his wife's insanity, in short, which made tenable the permanent—the secure—presence in Bloomsbury of Leonard himself. Her madness fed his genius for responsibility; it became for him a corridor of access to her genius. The spirit of Bloomsbury was not Leonard's, his temperament was against it —Bloomsbury could have done without him. So could a sane Virginia.

The whole question of Virginia's sexuality now came into Leonard's hands. And here too he was curiously ambivalent. The honeymoon was not a success; they consulted Vanessa, Vanessa the sexual creature—when had she had her first orgasm? Vanessa could not remember. "No doubt," she reflected, "I sympathized with such things if I didn't have them from the time I was 2." "Why do you think people make such a fuss about marriage and copulation?" Virginia was writing just then; "... certainly I find the climax immensely exaggerated." Vanessa and Leonard put their heads together over it. Vanessa said she believed Virginia "never had understood or sympathized with sexual passion in men"; this news, she thought, "consoled" Leonard. For further consolation the two of them rehearsed (and this was before England had become properly aware of Freud) Virginia's childhood trauma inflicted by her elder half-brother George Duckworth, who had, under cover of big-brotherly affection, repeatedly entered the nursery at night for intimate fondlings, the nature of which Virginia then hardly comprehended; she knew only that he frightened her and that she despised him. Apparently this explanation satisfied Leonard—the "consolation" worked—if rather too quickly; the ability to adjust speedily to disappointment is a good and useful trait in a colonial officer, less so in a husband. It does not contradict the uxorious temperament, however, and certainly not the nursing enterprise: a wife who is seen to be frigid as well as mad is simply taken for that much sicker. But too ready a reconcilement to bad news is also a kind of abandonment, and Leonard seems very early to have relinquished, or allowed Virginia to relinquish, the sexual gratifications of marriage. All the stranger, since he repeatedly speaks of himself as "lustful." And he is not known to have had so much as a dalliance during his marriage.

On the other hand, Quentin Bell suggests—a little coyly, as if only blamelessly hinting—that Virginia Woolf's erotic direction was perhaps toward women rather than men. The "perhaps" is crucial: the index to the first volume lists "passion for Madge Vaughan," "passion for Violet Dickinson," but the corresponding textual passages are all projections from the most ordinary sort of data. Madge Vaughan was a cousin by marriage whom Virginia knew from the age of seven; at sixteen she adored her still, and once stood in the house paralyzed by rapture, thinking "Madge is here; at this moment she is actually under this roof"—an emotion, she once said, which she never equaled afterward. Many emotions at sixteen are never equaled afterward. Of Virginia's intense letter-writing to Violet Dickinson—a friend of her dead half-sister—Quentin Bell says: "... it is clear to the modern reader, though it was not at all clear to Virginia, that she was in love and that her love was returned." What is even clearer is that it is possible to be too "modern," if that is what enables one to read sensuality into every exuberant or sympathetic friendship between women.

Vita Sackville-West, of course, whom Virginia Woolf knew when both writers were already celebrated, was an established Sapphist, and was plainly in pursuit of Virginia. Virginia, she wrote, "dislikes the quality of masculinity," but that was the view of one with a vested interest in believing it. As for Virginia, she "felt," according to her biographer, "as a lover feels—she desponded when she fancied herself neglected, despaired when Vita was away, waited anxiously for letters, needed Vita's company and lived in that strange mixture of elation and despair which lovers—and one would have supposed only lovers—can experience." But all this is Quentin Bell. Virginia herself, reporting a three-day visit from Sackville-West, appears erotically detached: "These Sapphists *love* women; friendship is never untinged with amorosity. . . . I like her and being with her and the splendour—she shines in the grocer's shop ... with a candle lit radiance." She acknowledged what she readily called Vita's "glamour," but the phrase "these Sapphists" is too mocking to be lover's language. And she was quick to criticize Vita (who was married to Harold Nicolson) as a mother: ". . . she is a little cold and off-hand with her boys." Virginia Woolf's biographer nevertheless supposes—he admits all this is conjecture—"some caressing, some bedding together." Still, in the heart of this love, if it was love, was the ultimate withdrawal: "In brain and insight," Virginia remarked in her diary, "she is not as highly organized as I am." Vita was splendid but "not reflective." She wrote "with a pen of brass." And: "I have no enormous opinion of her poetry." Considering all of which, Quentin Bell notes persuasively that "she could not really love without feeling that she was in the presence of a superior intellect." Sackville-West, for her part, insisted that not only did Virginia not like the quality of masculinity, but also the "possessiveness and love of domination in men."

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Yet Leonard Woolf dominated Virginia Woolf overwhelmingly—nor did she resist—not so much because his braininess impressed her (his straightforwardly thumping writing style must have claimed her loyalty more than her admiration), but because he possessed her in the manner of—it must be said again—a strong-minded nurse with obsessive jurisdiction over a willful patient. The issue of Virginia Woolf's tentative or potential lesbianism becomes reduced, at this point, to the merest footnote of possibility. Sackville-West called her "inviolable"; and the fact is she was conventionally married, and had conventional expectations of marriage. She wanted children. For a wedding present Violet Dickinson sent her a cradle. "My baby will sleep in [it]," she said at thirty. But it stood empty, and she felt, all her life, the ache of the irretrievable. "I don't like the physicalness of having children of my own," she wrote at forty-five, recording how "the little creatures"—Vanessa's children—"moved my infinitely sentimental throat." But then, with a lurch of candor: "I can dramatize myself a parent, it is true. And perhaps I have killed the feeling instinctively; or perhaps nature does." Two years after declaring the feeling killed, during a dinner party full of worldly conversation with the Webbs and assorted eminences, she found herself thinking: "L. and myself . . . the pathos, the symbolical quality of the childless couple."

The feeling was not killed; it had a remarkable durability. There is no record of her response to the original decision not to have children. That decision was Leonard's, and it was "medical." He consulted three or four people variously qualified, including Vanessa's doctor and the nurse who ran the home to which Virginia was sent when most dangerously disturbed (and to whom, according to Bell, Leonard ascribed "an unconscious but homosexual passion for Virginia"—which would, one imagines, make one wonder about the disinterestedness of her advice). Leonard also requested the opinion of Dr. George Savage, Virginia's regular physician, whom he disliked, and was heartily urged to have babies; soon after we find him no longer in consultation with Dr. Savage. Bell tells us that "in the end Leonard decided and persuaded Virginia to agree that, although they both wanted children, it would be too dangerous for her to have them." The "too dangerous" is left unexplained; we do not even know Leonard's ostensible reason. Did he think she could not withstand pregnancy and delivery? She was neither especially frail nor without energy, and was a zealous walker, eight miles at a time, over both London and countryside; she hefted piles of books and packed them for the Hogarth Press; she had no organic impediments. Did he believe she could not have borne the duties of rearing? But in that class there was no household without its nanny (Vanessa had two), and just as she never had to do a housekeeping chore (she never laid a fire, or made a bed, or washed a sock), she need not have been obliged to take physical care of a child. Did he, then, fear an inherited trait—diseased offspring? Or did he intend to protect the phantom child from distress by preventing its birth into a baleful household? Or did he mean, out of some curious notion of intellectual purity, not to divide the strength of Virginia's available sanity, to preserve her undistracted for her art?

WHATEVER the reason, and to spare her—or himself—what pains we can only guess at, she was in this second instance released from "normality." Normality is catch-as-catch-can. Leonard, in his deliberateness, in his responsibility, was more serious than that, and surrendered her to a program of omissions. She would be spared the tribulations both of the conjugal bed and of childbed. She need not learn ease in the one; she need not, no, must not, venture into the other. In forbidding Virginia maternity, Leonard abandoned her to an unparalleled and unslakable envy. Her diary again and again records the pangs she felt after visits with Vanessa's little sons—pangs, defenses, justifications: she suffered. Nor was it a social suffering—she did not feel deprived of children because she was expected to. The name "Virginia Woolf" very soon acquired the same resonance for her contemporaries ("this celebrity business is quite chronic," she wrote) as it has for us—after which she was expected to be only Virginia Woolf. She learned, after a while, to be only that (which did not, however, prevent her from being an adored and delightful aunt), and to mock at Vanessa's mothering, and to call it obsessive and excessive. She suffered the envy of the childless for the fruitful, precisely this, and nothing societally imposed; and she even learned to transmute maternal envy into a more manageable variety—literary begrudging. This was directed at Vanessa's second son, Julian Bell, killed in the Spanish Civil War, toward whose literary ambitions Virginia Woolf was always ungenerous, together with Leonard; a collection of Julian's essays, prepared after his death, Leonard dubbed "Vanessa's necrophily." Vanessa-envy moved on into the second generation. It was at bottom a rivalry of creatureliness, in which Virginia was always the loser. Vanessa was on the side of "normality," the placid mother of three, enjoying all the traditional bourgeois consolations; she was often referred to as a madonna; and at the same time she was a thoroughgoing bohemian. Virginia was anything but placid, yet lived a sober sensible domestic life in a marriage stable beyond imagining, with no trace of bohemianism. Vanessa the bohemian madonna had the best of both hearth-life and free life. Virginia was barred from both.

Without an authoritative domestic role, with no one in the household dependent on her (for years she quarreled with her maid on equal or inferior

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terms), and finding herself always—as potential patient—in submission, Virginia Woolf was by degrees nudged into a position of severe dependency. It took odd forms: Leonard not only prescribed milk at eleven in the morning, but also topics for conversation in the evening. Lytton Strachey's sister-in-law recalls how among friends Leonard would work up the "backbone" of a subject "and then be happy to let [Virginia] ornament it if she wanted to." And he gave her pocket money every week. Her niece Angelica reports that "Leonard kept Virginia on very short purse-strings," which she exercised through the pleasures of buying "colored string and sealing-wax, notebooks and pencils." When she came to the end of writing a book, she trembled until Leonard read it and gave his approval. William Plomer remembers how Leonard would grow alarmed if, watching Virginia closely, he saw her laugh a little too convulsively.* And once she absent-mindedly began to flick bits of meat off her dinner plate; Leonard hushed the company and led her away.

All of which has given Leonard his reputation for saintliness. A saint who successively secures acquiescence in frigidity, childlessness, dependency? Perhaps; probably; of course. These are, after all, conventual vows—celibacy, barrenness, obedience. But Leonard Woolf was a socialist, not an ascetic; he had a practical political intelligence; he was the author of books called *Empire and Commerce in Africa* and *Socialism and Co-operation*; he ran the Hogarth Press like a good businessman; at the same time he edited a monthly periodical, the *International Review*; he was literary editor of the *Nation*. He had exactly the kind of commonsensical temperament which scorns, and is repelled by, religious excess. And of Virginia he made a shrine; of himself, a monk. On the day of her death Virginia walked out of the house down to the river Ouse and drowned herself; not for nothing was that house called Monk's House. The letter she left for Leonard was like almost every other suicide note, horribly banal, not a writer's letter at all, and rich with guilt—"I feel certain I am going mad again. I feel we can't go through another of those terrible times. . . . I can't go on spoiling your life any longer." To Vanessa she wrote, "All I want to say is that Leonard has been so astonishingly good, every day, always; I can't imagine that anyone could have done more for me than he has ... I feel he has so much to do that he will go on, better without me. . . ."

Saints make guilt—especially when they impose monkish values; there is nothing new in that. And it was the monk as well as her madness she was fleeing when she walked into the Ouse, though it was the saint she praised. "I don't think two people could have been happier than we have been," the note to Leonard ended. A tragic happiness—such a thing is possible: cheerful invalids are a commonplace, and occasionally one hears of happy inmates. A saintly monk, a monkish nurse? All can be taken together, and all are true together. But the drive toward monkishness was in Leonard. What was natural for himself he prescribed for Virginia, and to one end only: to prevent her ongoing nervous crises from reaching their extreme state; to keep her sane. And to keep her sane was, ultimately, to keep her writing. It is reasonable to imagine that without Leonard Woolf there would have been very little of that corpus the name Virginia Woolf calls to mind—there would have been no *Mrs. Dalloway*, no *To the Lighthouse*, no *The Waves*, no *Common Reader*. And it may be that even the word Bloomsbury—the redolence, the signal—would not have survived, since she was its center. "She would not have been the symbol" of Bloomsbury, T.S. Eliot said, "if she had not been the maintainer of it." For Bloomsbury as an intellectual "period" to have escaped oblivion, there had to be at least one major literary voice to carry it beyond datedness. That voice was hers.

The effort to keep her sane was mammoth. Why did Leonard think it was worth it? The question, put here for the second time, remains callous but inevitable. Surely it would have been relieving at last (and perhaps to both of them) to let her slide away into those rantings, delusions, hallucinations; she might or might not have returned on her own. It is even possible that the nursing was incidental, and that she recovered each time because she still had the capacity to recover. But often enough Leonard—who knew the early symptoms intimately—was able to prevent her from going under; each pulling back from that brink of dementia gained her another few months of literary work. Again and again he pulled her back. It required cajolery, cunning, mastery, agility, suspiciousness, patience, spoon-feeding, and an overwhelming sensitiveness to every flicker of her mood. Obviously it drained him; obviously he must have been tempted now and then to let it all go and give up. Almost anyone else would have. Why did he not? Again the answer must be manifold. Because she was his wife; because she was the beloved one to whom he had written during the courtship, "You don't know what a wave of happiness comes over me when I see you smile . . ."†; because his conscience obliged him to; because she suffered; because—this before much else—it was in his nature to succor suffering. And also: because of her gift; because of her genius; for the sake of literature; because she was unique. And because she had been a Miss Stephen; because she was Thoby Stephen's sister; because she was a daughter of Leslie Stephen; because she was, like Leon-

* *Recollections of Virginia Woolf by Her Contemporaries*, edited by Joan Russell Noble, Morrow, 207 pp., $6.95.

† From an unpublished letter in the Berg Collection; quoted in the New York *Times*, June 14, 1973.

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ard's vision of Cambridge itself, "compounded of ... the atmosphere of long years of history and great traditions and famous names [and] a profoundly civilized life"; because she was Bloomsbury; because she was England.

For her sake, for art's sake, for his own sake. Perhaps above all for his own sake. In her he had married a kind of escutcheon; she represented the finest grain of the finest stratum in England. What he shored up against disintegration was the life he had gained—a birthright he paid for by wheedling porridge between Virginia Woolf's resisting lips.

PROUST is right to tell us to go to a writer's books, not to his loyalties. Wherever Leonard Woolf is, there Virginia Woolf is not. The more Leonard recedes or is not present, the more Virginia appears in force. Consequently Quentin Bell's biography—the subversive strength of which is Leonard—demands an antidote. The antidote is, of course, in the form of a reminder—that Virginia Woolf was a woman of letters as well as a patient; that she did not always succumb but instead could be an original fantasist and fashioner of an unaccustomed way of seeing; that the dependency coincided with a vigorous intellectual autonomy; that together with the natural subordination of the incapacitated she possessed the secret confidence of the innovator.

Seen through Leonard's eyes, she is, in effect, always on the verge of lunacy. "I am quite sure," he tells us in his autobiography, "that Virginia's genius was closely connected with what manifested itself as mental instability and insanity. The creative imagination in her novels, her ability to 'leave the ground' in conversation, and the voluble delusions of the breakdown all came from the same place in her mind—she 'stumbled after her own voice' and followed 'the voices that fly ahead.' " At the same time her refusal to eat was associated with guilt—she talked of her "faults"—and Leonard insists that "she remained all through her illness, even when most insane, terribly sane in three-quarters of her mind. The point is that her insanity was in her premises, in her beliefs. She believed, for instance, that she was not ill. ... "

Seen through the books, she is never "ill," never lunatic. Whether it was mental instability or a clear-sighted program of experiment in the shape of the novel that unhinged her prose from the conventional margins that had gone before is a question not worth speculating over. Leonard said that when mad she heard the birds sing in Greek. The novels are not like that: it is not the data that are altered, but the sequence of things. When Virginia Woolf assaulted the "old" fiction in her famous essay "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," she thought she was recommending getting rid of the habit of data; she thought this was to be her fictive platform. But when she grappled with her own inventions, she introduced as much data as possible and strained to express it all under the pressure of a tremendous simultaneity. What she was getting rid of was consecutiveness; precisely the habit of premises. If clinging to premises was the sanity of her insanity, then the intent of her fiction was not an extension of her madness, as Leonard claimed, but its calculated opposite. The poetry of her prose may have been like the elusive poetry of her dementia, but its steadfast design was not. "The design," she wrote of *Mrs. Dalloway,* "is so queer and masterful"; elated, she saw ahead. She was an artist; she schemed, and not through random contractions or inflations of madness, but through the usual methods of art: inspired intellection, the breaking down of expectation into luminous segments of shock.

A simpler way of saying all this is that what she achieved as a stylist cannot really be explained through linking it with madness. The diaries give glimpses of rationalized prefigurations; a letter from Vanessa suggests moths, which metamorphosed into *The Moths,* which became *The Waves.* She knew her destination months before she arrived; she was in control of her work, she did what she meant to do. If the novels are too imaginatively astonishing to be persuasive on this point, the essays will convince. They are read too little, and not one of them is conceptually stale, or worn in any other way. In them the birds do not sing in Greek either, but the Greek—the sign of a masterly 19th-century literary education—shows like a spine. In the essays the control of brilliant minutiae is total—historical and literary figures, the particulars of biography, society, nationality, geography. She is a courier for the past. In Volume III of the *Collected Essays,* for instance, the range is from Chaucer through Montaigne through some Elizabethans major and minor, through Swift and Sterne and Lord Chesterfield, Fanny Burney and Cowper. She was interested also in the lives of women, especially writers. She studies Sara Coleridge, the poet's daughter; Harriette Wilson, the mistress of the Earl of Craven; Dr. Johnson's Mrs. Thrale; and Dorothy Osborne, a talented letter-writer of the 17th century. The language and scope of the essays astound. If they are "impressionistic," they are not self-indulgent; they put history before sensibility. When they are ironic, it is the kind of irony that enlarges the discriminatory faculty and does not serve the cynical temper. They mean to interpret other lives by the annihilation of the crack of time: they are after what the novels are after, a compression of then and now into the simultaneity of a singular recognition and a single comprehension. They mean to make every generation, and every instant, contemporaneous with every other generation and instant. And yet—it does not contradict—they are, taken all together, the English Essay incarnate.

THE autonomous authority of the fiction, the more public authority of the essays, are the antidotes to Bell's Woolf, to Leonard's Vir-

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ginia. But there is a third antidote implicit in the whole of the work, and in the drive behind the work, and that is Virginia Woolf's feminism. It ought to be said at once that it was what can now be called "classical" feminism. The latter-day choice of Virginia Woolf, on the style of Sylvia Plath, as a current women's movement avatar is inapposite and mistaken. Classical feminism is inimical to certain developing strands of "liberation." Where feminism repudiates the conceit of the "gentler sex," liberation has come to reaffirm it. Where feminism asserts a claim on the larger world, liberation shifts to separatism. Where feminism scoffs at the plaint of "sisters under the skin," and maintains individuality of condition and temperament, liberation reinstates sisterhood and sameness. Where feminism shuns self-preoccupation, liberation experiments with self-examination, both psychic and medical. Classical feminism as represented by Virginia Woolf meant one thing only: access to the great world of thinking, being, and doing. The notion of "male" and "female" states of intellect and feeling, hence of prose, ultimately of culture, would have been the occasion of a satiric turn for Virginia Woolf; so would the idea of a politics of sex. Clive Bell reports that she licked envelopes once or twice for the Adult Suffrage League, but that she "made merciless fun of the flag-waving fanaticism" of the activists.

She was not political—or, perhaps, just political enough, as when Chekhov notes that "writers should engage themselves in politics only enough to protect themselves from politics." Though one of her themes was women in history (several of her themes, rather; she took her women one by one, not as a race, species, or nation), presumably she would have mocked at the invention of a "history of women"—what she cared for, as *A Room of One's Own* both lucidly and passionately lays out, was access to a unitary culture. Indeed, *Orlando* is the metaphorical expression of this idea. History as a record of division or exclusion was precisely what she set herself against: the Cambridge of her youth kept women out, and all her life she preserved her resentment by pronouncing herself undereducated. She studied at home, Greek with Janet Case, the sister of Walter Pater, literature and mathematics with her father, and as a result was left to count on her fingers forever—but for people who grow up counting on their fingers, even a Cambridge education cannot do much. Nevertheless she despised what nowadays is termed "affirmative action," granting places in institutions as a kind of group-reparation; she thought it offensive to her own earned prestige, and once took revenge on the notion. In 1935 Forster, a member of the Committee of the London Library, informed her that a debate was underway concerning the admission of women members. No women were admitted. Six years later Virginia Woolf was invited to serve; she said she would not be a "sop"—she ought to have been invited years earlier, on the same terms as Forster, as a writer; not in 1941, when she was already fifty-nine, as a woman.

Nor will she do as martyr. Although Cambridge was closed to her, literary journalism was not; although she complains of being chased off an Oxbridge lawn forbidden to the feet of women, no one ever chased her off a page. Almost immediately she began to write for the *Times Literary Supplement* and for the *Cornhill*; she was then twenty-two. She was, of course, Leslie Stephen's daughter, and it is doubtful whether any other young writer, male or female, could have started off so auspiciously: still, we speak here not of "connections" but of experience. At about the same time she was summoned to teach at Morley, a workers' college for men and women. One of her reports survives, and Quentin Bell includes it as an appendix. "My four women," she writes, "can hear eight lectures on the French Revolution if they wish to continue their historical learning"—and these were working-class women, in 1905. By 1928, women had the vote, and full access to universities, the liberal professions, and the civil service. As for Virginia Woolf, in both instances, as writer and teacher, she was solicited—and this cannot be, after all, only because she was Leslie Stephen's daughter. She could use on the spot only her own gifts, not the rumor of her father's. Once she determined to ignore what Bell calls the "matrimonial market" of upper-class partying, into which for a time her half-brother George dragooned her, she was freed to her profession. It was not true then, it is not true now, that a sublime and serious pen can be circumscribed.

Virginia Woolf was a practitioner of her profession from an early age; she was not deprived of an education, rather of a particular college; she grew rich and distinguished; she developed her art on her own line, according to her own sensibilities, and was acclaimed for it; though insane, she was never incarcerated. She was an elitist, and must be understood as such. What she suffered from, aside from the abysses of depression which characterized her disease, was not anything like the condition of martyrdom—unless language has become so flaccid that being on occasion patronized begins to equal death for the sake of an ideal. What she suffered from really was only the minor inflammations of the literary temperament. And she was not often patronized: her fame encouraged her to patronize others. She could be unkind, she could be spiteful, she could envy—her friendship with Katherine Mansfield was always unsure, being founded on rivalry. Mansfield and her husband, the journalist John Middleton Murry, "work in my flesh," Virginia Woolf wrote, "after the manner of the jigger insect. It's annoying, indeed degrading, to have these bitternesses." She was bitter also about James

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Joyce; she thought him, says Bell, guilty of "atrocities." Her diary speaks of "the damned egotistical self; which ruins Joyce," and she saw *Ulysses* as "insistent, raw, striking and ultimately nauseating." But she knew Joyce to be moving in the same direction as herself; it was a race which, despite her certainty of his faults, he might win. By the time of her death she must have understood that he *had* won. Still, to be outrun in fame is no martyrdom. And her own fame was and is in no danger, though, unlike Joyce, she is not taken as a fact of nature. Virginia Woolf's reputation in the thirty and more years since her death deepens; she becomes easier to read, more complex to consider.

To Charlotte Brontë, born sixty-six years before Virginia Woolf, Robert Southey, then Poet Laureate, had written, "Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be." No one addressed Virginia Woolf of Bloomsbury in this fashion; she was sought out by disciples, editors, litterateurs; in the end Oxford and Cambridge asked her to lecture before their women's colleges. If the issue of martyrdom is inappropriate (implying as it does that a woman who commits suicide is by definition a martyr), what of heroism? Virginia Woolf's death was or was not heroic, depending on one's view of suicide by drowning. The case for Leonard's heroism is more clear-cut: a saint is noble on behalf of others, a hero on behalf of himself. But if Virginia Woolf is to be seen as a heroine, it must be in those modes outside the manner of her death and even the manner of her life as a patient in the house.

If she is to be seen as a heroine, it must be in the conjuring of yet another of those Bloomsbury photographs—this time one that does not exist. The picture is of a woman sitting in an old chair holding a writing-board; the point of her pen touches a half-filled page. To gaze at her bibliography is, in a way, to conjure this picture that does not exist—hour after hour, year after year, a life's accumulation of stupendous visionary toil. A writer's heroism is in the act of writing; not in the finished work, but in the work as it goes.

Vanessa's son gives us no heroine: only this stubborn and sometimes querulous self-starving madwoman, with so stoic, so heroic, a male nurse. And when she runs away from him to swallow the Ouse, the heroism of both of them comes to an end.

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George Lichtheim, 1912-1973

Walter Laqueur

As a student of Marxism and historian of ideas, as an original thinker and a writer of exceptional brilliance, George Lichtheim, who died in April of this year, first came to the attention of general readers with the publication of *Marxism* in 1961. Previously, he had been known to a limited intellectual circle in the United States as a first-rate political journalist and the author of numerous articles—erudite, witty, often splenetic—on a variety of subjects. In England only a very few had heard of him; he belonged neither to the political-cultural establishment nor to any of the anti-establishment cliques, and he had—wisely, as students held no real interest for him and he was not an outstanding speaker—resisted attempts to draw him into the academic world. Up until the very end it was difficult to place him. Was he a gifted dilettante or a thinker of major importance? Where did he belong politically? His writings, though lucid, were of great complexity, and defied usual categories; though they abounded in ideas and forcefully stated opinions, they held no single message. For this reason, and because he did not identify with any organized political movement, George Lichtheim never achieved the kind of vogue that came the way of a number of political thinkers in the 50's and 60's, despite the fact that he was intellectually superior to almost all of them.

George's encyclopedic knowledge, his deep powers of intellect, his phenomenal memory and total independence of judgment, above all the rare gift of synthesis which he possessed, should have led him to write a large, fundamental work analyzing the basic political and cultural trends of our time. But he shied away from this task, for which he was uniquely equipped, except, indirectly, in his last book, *Europe in the Twentieth Century*, written in a few months at a time of great personal stress. For all his intellectual arrogance, George was too modest in appraising his own talents. He considered himself a "mere" historian of ideas, and in his very last letter to a friend he wrote that he would probably be remembered as a popularizer. Like his accomplishments, his abilities were greater than he himself knew.

George Lichtheim was born in Berlin in 1912 of a well-to-do and thoroughly assimilated Jewish family that hailed from Eastern Prussia (in later years he signed letters to close friends "Regiomontanus"—Königsberger). He was named George after his grandfather, a highly successful businessman who had himself had no Jewish education. The style of the Berlin Jewish *haute bourgeoisie* in those early years of the century differed little from that of their non-Jewish neighbors—they kept horses, lived in big, comfortable houses, summered at seaside resorts on the Baltic coast or at Kronberg in Taunus. Richard Lichtheim, George's father, noted in his autobiography that until the age of twenty he never met anyone who observed the Jewish ritual laws. Neither did he encounter manifestations of anti-Semitism at school (before World War I anti-Jewish activity in Germany was restricted to the political fringe, whereas in France, for example, it occupied a place close to the center).

Yet even though he was himself remote from things Jewish, Richard Lichtheim found something radically wrong with the reaction of his fellow Jews to the prevailing attitudes toward them in German society. They were tolerated but not fully accepted, and the fact that they acquiesced in this state of affairs reflected adversely on their pride, their self-esteem. Full assimilation was not impossible, Richard believed, but the price being demanded was too high. And so Richard Lichtheim became one of the first German Zionists of the post-assimilatory variety, a Zionist who had virtually no ties to speak of with Judaism.

When George Lichtheim senior died in 1909, leaving his children financially independent, Richard, who was just about to conclude his studies, instead went to work full time for the World Zionist Organization. In 1910 he traveled to Palestine, and in 1911 undertook a mission to Constantinople. In the house of a local Ashkenazi Jewish family there he met Irene Hafter, a young lady of striking beauty; they fell in love, became engaged,

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and were married the same year. (Irene's father had fought in Garibaldi's army; on the groom's side was Johann Jacoby, the stormy petrel of the far Left of German liberalism: radical democracy was part of the family tradition to which George Lichtheim fell heir.) The young couple—Richard was twenty-six when he first became a Zionist diplomat—settled in Berlin where George was born in 1912. Richard at the time was editor of *Die Welt,* the central organ of the World Zionist Organization. In 1913 he returned to Constantinople, this time for four years; the Turkish capital was then the center of Zionist politics. Owing to his connections with the German foreign ministry, Richard Lichtheim was able to play a role in the history of Jewish Palestine which until recently has not been fully recognized. It was his intervention that helped pressure the Turkish authorities to cease expelling Jews from Palestine after the outbreak of the war; but for him and a few of his colleagues there would have been no Jews left in Palestine by 1917 and the Balfour Declaration might have remained a dead letter. Richard returned to Berlin in 1917, and the family took an apartment in the Lietzenburger Strasse, Olivaer Platz, a few yards from the Kurfuerstendamm. George once told me that one of his earliest "political" recollections was watching the return of the defeated Imperial army in 1918.

Immediately after the end of the war the Lichtheims decided to emigrate to Palestine, and Richard moved to Holland on the assumption that it would be easier to obtain an immigration permit from a neutral country. From Amsterdam he was recalled by Chaim Weizmann to join the Zionist executive in London. For the next two years George went to school in Hampstead, where he excelled, *mirabile dictu,* in athletics; those who knew him in his London school days remember him as an exceedingly well-behaved boy. But Berlin, where the Lichtheims returned in 1923, was imcomparably more exciting than London and the next ten years, of high school and university, were the really formative ones in his life. These too were the golden years of the Weimar Republic, the "second Periclean age," with Berlin serving as the center of the avant-garde world, the spearhead of everything new and exciting, the capital of the modern theater and the cinema, of neo-Marxist thought and of psychoanalysis. Historians have called this period a false blossoming, a dance on the rim of a volcano, but contemporaries saw it differently, at least before 1930 when the Nazis emerged as the second largest party in the country.

It was in these surroundings that George grew up; unlike many youngsters his age he did not belong to a youth movement—not for him the summer camps, the communal activities, all the neo-Romantic trappings and mystique of youth. Instead he moved in a circle of close acquaintances consisting mostly of his own classmates and those of his sister and the sons and daughters of family friends. Relations with his father were good though perhaps not very close: intellectually they were even then poles apart—Richard was a Kantian (of the Fries-Nelson school), George an almost fanatical Hegelian; where the father was, if anything, anti-socialist, the son had been converted to Marxism at an early age. Yet the two respected each other. George envied his father his outgoing, extrovert personality, his self-confidence; Richard recognized early on the intellectual stature of his son, and saw too that he would not have an easy life. With his mother things were a little more complicated. Moody, afflicted with a variety of minor diseases, Irene led a withdrawn life; she seldom went out, preferring the semi-darkness of her bedroom, where she read French novels, to the active social life her husband liked to lead. When George enrolled at Heidelberg in 1932 she joined him there—unusual behavior as far as George's fellow students were concerned.

THOSE who attended high school and university with George recall him as strikingly good-looking, with a dreamy look, and also as immensely well read, a master of German style (his great model was Heine). Already he exhibited the first signs of that *Weltschmerz* which marked his later years, the tendency to introspection and biting irony. He had no close friends; he once said that a glass wall separated him from other people. A pattern of unhappy and inconclusive love affairs characterized his youth, as it would his entire life.

He became a Marxist as a result of his own reading and long conversations with Boris Goldenberg—a friend of the family and an erstwhile leader of the Communist student organization who left the party in the late 20's. Then, during his year at Heidelberg, Richard Lowenthal exerted considerable influence on him. George at this time belonged to the periphery of the SAP, a left-wing group that had split away from the Social Democrats in the early 30's (like most of the small independent groups of the Left it consisted largely of Jews). For the Social Democrats, utterly lacking in style, dynamism, or an instinct for power, George and his friends had nothing but icy contempt; it seemed useless even to bother criticizing them. The SAP directed its polemical energies instead at the Communists, who despite their suicidal line and Stalin's reactionary policy were not yet thought to be beyond redemption.

George read Marx assiduously, including the early writings which had just been discovered; he also studied Georg Lukács and Karl Korsch at this time; and there was one young ex-Marxist writer of great originality, Franz Borkenau, in whom he saw a kindred spirit. Borkenau was a genius of sorts, a man of deep insight and erudition; though he was frequently mistaken in his political anal-

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yses and prognostications, one could profit from his mistakes rather more than from the incontrovertible findings of pedestrian thinkers. In the preface to *Marxism* George acknowledged his debt to this "argonaut of the spirit." Aside from Gershom Scholem, and to a certain extent in his last years the German philosopher Juergen Habermas, Borkenau was the only one whom George ever acknowledged as his master—this, despite the fact that Borkenau became an outspoken anti-Marxist in later life.

When George went to Heidelberg in April 1932 at the age of twenty it was in order to study law, a subject which turned out to be not of the slightest interest to him. Nor did he devote a great deal of time to politics, limiting his activity to discussion meetings and, on one or two occasions, distributing SAP leaflets in nearby villages. He would get up late, attend a lecture or look up a book in the Institute of Social Sciences, have lunch at the Heberlein restaurant in the Schlossgraben, and proceed from there to the Kafesoe, a coffee-house in which foreign papers were available. Already a man of firm habit, George could not live without the *Manchester Guardian,* at that time one of the world's great newspapers. Life was conducted at a leisurely pace during this idyll before the storm. Then in July 1932 von Papen deposed the Social Democratic government in Prussia. George told a friend that this marked the beginning of fascism in Germany, but neither he nor the handful of German-Jewish students who were his comrades could do anything about the situation but wait. In January 1933 the Nazis came to power and he and his friends left the German universities.

The two semesters at Heidelberg were the beginning and the end of George's higher education. From Germany he proceeded to London where he found work as a floorwalker in the Oxford-Orchard Street branch of Marks & Spencer, the famous department-store chain; his principal assignment was dispensing change to the salesgirls. George stayed at this job for about six months. Kilburn, where he lived, was a fairly dismal neighborhood; although his position was neither better nor worse than the usual lot of a new immigrant, it could hardly be called congenial to his talents. He went to movies frequently and became a Greta Garbo fan. (The cold beauty of the Swedish film star may have reminded him of his great unrequited love from Berlin days, a Russian girl with an aura of mystery who had now disappeared from his life altogether.)

I am not certain whether George was fired by Marks & Spencer or whether he left of his own accord, but his stay in London came to an abrupt end in the summer of 1934, when he left for Palestine. In some respects this was an anticlimactic move, a transition from the political center of the Western world to a semi-civilized backwater in which Europe and European culture seemed light years away. Palestine was a strange, unfamiliar country to George, with its mix of British colonial administrators, Arabs, and an East European Jewish establishment with which he had nothing in common. George had never been a "good Jew," he considered the Zionist idea of an "ingathering of exiles" crazy, and while he had every sympathy for the Jewish settlers, and later for the Jewish state, he remained firmly convinced that everyone would have been much better off without Zionism's antiquated ideology: according to his Marxist convictions the age of small nations and states was very nearly over.

YET with all these reservations, and despite the difficulties of acculturation —George never learned Hebrew properly, though his Hebrew was not as bad as he pretended—Jerusalem in the 30's had its compensations. The neighborhood of Rehavia, where he lived, was what sociologists call a face-to-face community, and George became part of it. After a false start in business, for which he had no aptitude, he joined the staff of the *Palestine Post* in 1935; eventually he became its foreign editor. For the first time in his life he was earning his living at a job which provided some satisfaction, even though he began grumbling early on about the limited scope provided by a small-town newspaper. The *Palestine Post* was actually not a bad newspaper at all; in fact it was (and, as the *Jerusalem Post,* still is) the best English-language paper between Paris and Calcutta. Gershon Agronsky, the paper's founder, not a great writer himself but a brilliant editor, had the insight to recognize the outstanding ability of this awkward and aggressive young man, and the faith both to hire him and then to keep him on despite his frequently outrageous behavior.

His colleagues called him "Poor George," in view of his unchanging pessimism. George was convinced, and so wrote, that the British policy of appeasement would be continued indefinitely, that Hitler would occupy Poland without a shot, and that the invasion of Britain was imminent and would likely succeed. At the same time he was quite certain that Hitler would lose the ensuing war. In general, on short-term political trends George was not a reliable prophet, while on long-term developments he was seldom totally wrong.* In those days, the analyses of world politics he wrote for the *Palestine Post* (under various pennames like "Proteus" or "European"), though undeniably brilliant, sometimes erred on the side of

* At the height of the Blitz in 1940 he gave a friend a sealed envelope containing his forecast of the subsequent course of the war. Among other things, his predictions concerning the campaigns in North Africa and in Russia turned out to be amazingly accurate. His only mistake was in assuming that the war would end in 1943 with the opening of an Allied second front in Europe.

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rationality; for the imponderables of politics, both national and international, he would acquire a feeling only in later years.

When the Spanish Civil War broke out George felt morally committed to join the Republican forces; the fact that he did not bothered him long afterward. He had no such qualms of conscience about World War II, however, perhaps having formed a more realistic assessment of his own potential contribution to the war effort. His military training was limited to a four-day course at Neve Ya'akov arranged by the Haganah about the time of the El Alamein campaign; there, along with other members of the Jerusalem intelligentsia, he was taught how to shoot and throw a hand grenade. But Gershon Agronsky had decided that George's place during the war was in the editorial offices of the *Palestine Post*, and so it was to be.

During his Jerusalem years George led a relatively normal life, much in contrast to the years before and after. He had a circle of friends and acquaintances from Berlin and London—Lea Ben Dor, T. R. Fyvel, Boris Goldenberg, and others. His parents had moved to Jerusalem (in 1939 his father would leave again to take over the Geneva office of the Jewish Agency, from where he was one of the first to transmit, in November 1942, news of the "Final Solution"). Through the philosopher Hans Jonas, whom he had known in London, George came in contact with a group of scholars, all a bit older than himself, who provided company, intellectual stimulation, and the education he had missed receiving in Germany. For several years, every Saturday afternoon, a group known as "*Pilegesh*" (Hebrew for concubine) met for tea and cake in George's little rooftop apartment in Radak Street, opposite the Italian consulate. In addition to George, "*Pilegesh*" consisted of the Orientalist H. J. Polotski, Hans Jonas, Hans Lewy (a classicist who died in 1945), the physicist and historian of science Shmuel Samburski, Gershom Scholem, and occasional visitors. Originally the circle had met in Hans Lewy's apartment and had included women, but as one by one the members got married the group became exclusively male in constitution. The conversation ranged from metaphysics to analyses of the latest reports from the Russian front. Members of the group were fond of writing poems in German, in the style of Goethe, Schiller, or Heine, in honor of a friend's birthday or some other important event.

A great deal could be written about this remarkable group of intellectuals, their quarrels, the inspiration they provided one another. But what is of importance here is that they and their wives provided a kind of home for George Lichtheim and made for a certain stability in his life. Twice a week he went to the movies with a girl friend, followed by dinner at Hesse's, the leading Jerusalem restaurant. Several times a week he saw his analyst, a gentleman of great erudition in philosophy and other fields; much in contravention of Freudian orthodoxy, their dialogue ranged over a wide spectrum of intellectual topics. At this period too George translated Scholem's magnum opus, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, into English, and, prodded by Hans Jonas, pursued his philosophical studies. For a while he also undertook to learn Arabic and Russian with Polotski, but did not acquire much proficiency; he could recite the beginning line of Tatiana's letter to Yevgeni Onegin and a smattering of kitchen Arabic ("this sausage is tasty"). George kept in touch with most of his Jerusalem friends up to the end of his life; these, he often said, were his happiest years.

As the war drew to its close George decided to leave Palestine—whether for a year or five or forever was not clear to him at the time. He once told me that the subsequent decision to settle permanently in London rather than Germany came to him one day in the middle of the war as he was reading an article by Martin Buber, of all people, in the waiting-room of a Jerusalem physician. In autumn 1945 he went to cover the Nuremberg trials for the *Palestine Post*. This was followed by an extended visit to Europe in the course of which it became clear to Gershon Agronsky that George would not return; albeit with a heavy heart, Agronsky decided to keep him on as European correspondent. George traveled in Austria and Italy, then moved on to France where he wrote about de Gaulle (whom he greatly admired) and the French literary scene. All in all, he saw a Europe in ruins but full of life; "the West is not barren of ideas," he wrote at a time when it was fashionable to proclaim the impending demise of European civilization.

But above all George was fascinated by Britain, and in 1946, at the age of thirty-four, he settled in London for the third time in his life. He wrote that the British Labour government was suffering from "overwork and mediocrity," and correctly predicted "critical times till 1950." In 1954 he saw reason for cautious optimism: new realism had prevailed, and "John Bull had lost a lot of fat but acquired bigger brains in the process." But the Foreign Office's handling of the Suez crisis made him despair of British statesmanship; a series of scathing articles on Anthony Eden (" he strangled himself with the old school tie—this confirmed his reputation for statesmanship") provoked a reaction from the Foreign Office, through the British embassy in Tel Aviv, in the form of vague threats of expulsion. (The Foreign Office was apparently not aware that George had in the meantime acquired British citizenship.) Yet his infatuation with Britain withstood his outrage and/or cynical despair at British politicians. English Jewry, on the other hand, might as well not have existed for

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George; he found it inferior in most respects to German, Russian, or American Jewry and to the best of my knowledge in all his years as a correspondent in London he never once commented on it. This non-recognition was mutual: the Anglo-Jewish establishment traditionally has not had much use for intellectuals unless they have been knighted or received the Nobel prize; at George's funeral the Jewish community of his adopted country was not represented.

Scanning his journalistic writings during the postwar decade one is struck in retrospect by the multitude of exceedingly astute comments, and a number of truly astounding foresights: on the emergent character of the cold war, for example, on American foreign policy, and on Soviet policy in the Middle East. At the same time there were the inevitable misjudgments of a political commentator who hardly ever deigned to go to briefings or press conferences but produced think-pieces at home. (Thus, the notion that John Foster Dulles would ever be U.S. Secretary of State seemed fanciful to him, and he once cabled his paper that Britain would not intervene at Suez, a position he maintained right up to the moment British troops were landed.) From a strictly professional point of view, George *qua* foreign journalist was the bane of all his editors; he never kept copies of his cables or articles and attempts to query a specific statement were fruitless. He made up for this, and more, by maintaining in his work the highest possible standards of intellectual rigor and cogency, and by his unique combination of corrosive wit, skepticism, and the irrepressible delight he took in the powers of the critical intelligence to explain and interpret the behavior of men in society.

Early on during his stay in London George (often using the pseudonym, G. L. Arnold) began to publish articles and criticism in British and American periodicals—the *Nineteenth Century and After*, the *Cambridge Journal*, and on the other side of the Atlantic in COMMENTARY, *Partisan Review*, and the *New Leader*. He became a member of the editorial committee of the *Nineteenth* (later the *Twentieth) Century* and for a while its chief editor; his association with COMMENTARY led in later years to a prolonged stay in New York as a member of the editorial staff, and after his return to London to permanent association as a contributing editor.

During the 50's the journalist became an author. He had not yet lost his interest in current affairs, but philosophy, history, and the social sciences came increasingly to preoccupy him. He had read voraciously and more or less systematically in these subjects ever since high school; in conversation he was given to *ex cathedra* statements which brooked no contradiction. But to write a book seemed a different proposition altogether. In 1943–44 he had composed a work on the politics of the postwar world in which among other things he had predicted the advent to power of the Labour party in Britain, though he attributed to the party a greater degree of farsightedness and determination than it was actually to demonstrate. At the time George Lichtheim was an unknown and a leading British publisher whom he approached showed no interest in the manuscript. This setback discouraged him and it was only ten years later that he began work on another book which was a *succès d'estime* but not much more. With *Marxism* in 1961, the transition was achieved from political journalism to historiography and, above all, to the study of the socialist movement which was to occupy him for a decade.

GEORGE LICHTHEIM became the leading historian of socialism of his time. He broke no fresh ground as far as matters of fact were concerned, the field having been well tilled by many capable scholars before him. Rather, his great contribution lay in offering a synthesis which had hitherto been lacking in discussions of socialism either as a political movement or as an ideology that took its place within the general context of 19th and 20th century intellectual history.

His views (which, incidentally, changed surprisingly little in the course of the years) would be impossible to summarize in the framework of a brief essay, nor is the task made any easier by the fact that of all Marxists he was the least orthodox. George was much interested in Marx's theories on primitive, feudal, and Oriental society, and above all he saw Marx as a master economist in the classical tradition and of course the premier analyst of the capitalist mode of production. At the same time, however, he took it as axiomatic that society had moved beyond the stage with the analysis of which Marx had been concerned; also, that Marx had misconstrued the immediate future; and that Marxism's accomplishments were "incompatible with its ultimate aims." In addition, he harbored deep reservations about historical materialism—partly out of an inclination since his childhood toward hero-worship, partly out of an innate pessimism, and partly out of sheer intellectual honesty: but for Lenin, Communism would not have come into power in Russia; without Hitler, in all probability Nazism would never have prevailed in Germany. A theory which belittled the role of the individual seemed therefore of limited use to a student of history. Furthermore, George's Jerusalem friends had demonstrated in countless conversations that in history the economic base was often of little help in explaining the ideological "superstructure."

What then attracted George Lichtheim in Marxism? As Eric Hobsbawm has expressed it, Marx's dreams and visions rather than his theories. To be a bit more specific, George was drawn

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on the one hand to the Promethean element in Marx, the grand vision of man as the center of the universe, the challenging of all established authority, the quest for freedom from economic degradation; on the other hand, he was fascinated by Marx as the philosophical heir of Hegel and as perhaps the greatest of all Victorians, the Marx of sweeping hypotheses and grandiose syntheses proclaimed with absolute certainty. Marx, as George Lichtheim saw him, came at the end of a century which had witnessed changes more profound than had occurred in any previous era. Marx recognized more acutely than his contemporaries the full extent of the transformation, and so he marked the transition to a new age which he himself in some measure helped to bring on. Marxism was unique because it was both a philosophy and the "theory of a revolutionary movement supposedly able to close the gap between speculative contemplation and empirical practice" (*Marxism in Modern France*). And even though the movement with which it was associated failed historically to attain its aims, the intellectual breakthrough signalized by Marx's thought was of enduring value. The Leninist revolution in Soviet Russia, an attempt to "overcome" philosophy by "realizing" its aims in practice, failed, but this had the paradoxically beneficial effect of freeing theory from practice, thought from action, and of enabling the independent Marxist to revert to the contemplative disposition which Marx believed he had safely left behind.

Among the movements bearing the label "Marxist," the Communists had failed because they confused socialism with state ownership, while the European Social Democrats were unsuccessful because they equated socialism with labor reformism and the welfare state. Soviet Communism in George's view was actually closer in inspiration to Blanquism and populism than to Marxism. Populism also manifested itself in an even clearer form in Maoism and other Third-World national-socialist movements. What occurred in these countries was the establishment of a dictatorship by the intelligentsia (or, to be precise, by an elitist avant-garde drawn from the intelligentsia) together with a drive toward modernization in order to insure national survival. Modernization could be carried out equally under fascist, pseudo-socialist, or straightforwardly nationalist regimes. Ideologues of movements of "national liberation" usually identified socialism with nationalism, the proletariat with the peasantry, anti-capitalism with anti-imperialism. George Lichtheim admitted that populism might indeed be suited to the Third World, more so than Marxism, but the idea (as propagated by sections of the New Left) that it could serve as a model for more advanced countries struck him as grotesque: "It is a waste of time to argue with populists, for they are able to hold contradictory beliefs with complete sincerity. In fact, they no longer need a theory, for practice grows out of populist sloganeering just as power is supposed to grow from the barrel of a gun."

George Lichtheim was totally out of sympathy with the fashionable view of the 60's that a new light was about to shine from the East; like Hegel and Marx, he was a firm believer in the inequality of nations. For countries like India he predicted nothing but catastrophe in the decades to come, just as he thought a nuclear war between Russia and China a distinct possibility ten years hence. As for the United States, however, he was convinced there was a good chance that democratic socialism—though under auspices very different from those in Europe—might prevail in the not-too-distant future, simply because the problems facing America were insoluble under liberal capitalism.

Indeed, despite his generally gloomy assessment of the actual condition of the world's socialist movements, and his derisory condemnation of Communism, George held firmly to his belief in an evolutionary socialism tacitly attuned to the technocratic necessities of the West's new industrial and post-bourgeois age. Technocracy had emerged as the dominant ideology of the post-liberal social order, and the line of division "no longer separates conservatives from socialists, but democrats from technocrats" (*Europe in the Twentieth Century*). The new socialism, transcending its class origins, would represent the "aspirations of the intelligentsia as well as those of the working class, itself in process of acquiring new skills and higher levels of education and awareness."

The obstacles on the road to progress were of course formidable. The post-industrial development of automation had given rise to a new hierarchy of functions, the bureaucracy had expanded, new forms of social conflict had come into being. It was more difficult than ever to join egalitarianism to the drive toward higher levels of economic performance: "The prospects of socialism in the classical sense are brightest where economic pressures are negligible and people can envisage an egalitarian way of life on the basis of social ownership of the means of production. In this sense the preconditions of a socialist order do not at present exist anywhere" (*Short History of Socialism*). This was not, however, to say that socialists were bound to fail, in the manner, say, of liberals, whose system in George's opinion had disintegrated both as a philosophy and as a way of managing the political order. The kind of society envisaged by socialists was not inscribed in the logic of the immediate future, and there was no longer a place for the old faith in automatic progress. Still, skepticism need not necessarily lead to inaction; George ended the introduction to his

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Imperialism with an invocation of the old motto of the Huguenots: *Point n'est besoin d'espoir pour entreprendre, ni de succès pour persévérer* (one does not need hope to begin an undertaking, nor success to persevere in it).

This in briefest outline was George's interpretation of the historical fortunes and prospects of Marxism and the socialist movement. He used to describe his approach in later years as close to that of the Frankfurt School of "critical theory." And he did share certain philosophical tenets of the Frankfurt School, including its Hegelianism and its hostility to positivism, although he found the neo-Marxism of the school's founders outdated. During his last years, politics, even in the broadest sense, began to bore him, and his interest shifted back to philosophy—from Marx, as it were, to Hegel. But he wondered whether there was any point in pursuing philosophical studies since the philosophers had not been notably successful in either interpreting or changing the world. In a long letter written during the last year of his life he provided his own personal answer to this question:

> The German philosophers have in fact Europeanized China by way of Hegel and Marx, and considering that there are 800 million Chinese in the world, this circumstance is not without importance. The same, I should say, applies to England's lasting impact on India. It was all done via thinkers like Mill or Marx. . . . Insofar as human history makes sense at all, certain moral and intellectual breakthroughs have made a permanent difference. . . . Profound changes are always brought about by some religious or philosophical genius. Take as an example, if you like, the emancipation of women or the impact of modern psychology on the treatment of children and of sexuality. I say nothing about what really matters to metaphysicians—*la condition humaine*: the ability to live without a belief in God and immortality, and so forth. Doesn't that concern every one of us? Two years ago I contemplated suicide. . . . If in the end I decided to carry on, that must have something to do with the Kantian attitudes I inherited from my father. . . . In the end, the only things that really count are those with which the poets and the philosophers are concerned: love and life, and the ability to carry on in the teeth of misfortune.

MY ACCOUNT of the main phases in George Lichtheim's biography and intellectual development can offer only the background of a fruitful and not-too-happy life. The genius of a major novelist or biographer would be required to capture faithfully all the qualities that made this complex personality so unique—his rudeness and generosity, his pedantry and his wit, his obsessions and his astonishing novelty of mind. When he was nineteen and just about to enter the university George accompanied some friends on a skiing holiday. Being a novice he naturally found the going difficult and after the third fall he gave up, turning aside the injunctions of his friends to persevere with the remark, "Don't you know, I have lemonade in my veins, not blood." It would be easier to write about him if the statement were even remotely true, or if he had been the aesthete and dilettante a young academic reviewer of his last book, a collection of essays, made him out to be.

In the late 50's George moved from a boarding house in Ryder Street, near the editorial offices of the *Economist,* to the top floor of a house belonging to his friends Francis and Ruth Carsten, in Hampstead. He lived there to all intents and purposes as a member of the family, relieved of many of the little chores of daily life that are so aggravating to a bachelor. He had sufficient space for his library; it was one of his many peculiarities never to quote from a book unless he owned it. For lunch he went to one of the little restaurants in Hampstead, in or off High Street; in the afternoon he walked to Hampstead Heath. The 60's were his most productive period. Work gave him satisfaction and he wrote quickly, as if the time at his disposal were limited. His manuscripts were sent to Esther Howell in Letchworth, the only person (he claimed) who could decipher his handwritten emendations. George took the most meticulous care with proofreading; he used to boast from his days as editor at the *Palestine Post* that material which passed through his hands never contained an error, and in later years he was even more obsessively painstaking. A printing error was to him a source of lasting mortification.

George traveled twice more to Israel but after the death of his father in 1963 he decided against further visits—it was too upsetting. Twice he stayed in America for lengthy periods; he fell in love with San Francisco (he was a visiting professor at Stanford University), and liked the intellectual stimulation provided by New York, but did not for a moment consider living in America permanently. His entire outlook was European, and he felt ill at ease in an atmosphere which (he said) lacked history and tradition; the writings of American social scientists (with a few exceptions) provoked some of his most sarcastic essays. In later years he very seldom left London; every trip became a major trial involving countless decisions that disturbed his daily routine. Dinner invitations were accepted only if the host lived not too far away; at 10:30 or 11 he would get up and leave.

In the 60's too came fame. His books were translated into several languages, and widely adopted as textbooks. There were teaching offers from many universities. Even in England people took notice—George's (anonymous) contributions to the *Times Literary Supplement* were widely read and discussed. Research students knocked on his

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door and letters flowed in, but most callers were sent away and correspondents were disposed of in two or three lines, often with a great deal of unnecessary rudeness. After several disastrous love affairs with ladies of intellectual distinction but (in one or two cases) emotional instability he reestablished contact with his distant beloved of Berlin days. They saw each other rarely but the relationship gave George the stability needed to function. When she died of cancer in 1970 he lost most of his incentive to write. He was increasingly plagued by insomnia, and this condition eventually became the fact overshadowing everything else in his life. He complained of loneliness and isolation; he would have been a welcome guest among friends almost any day of the week, but this was not what he had in mind.

Our conversations during the last year or two were dominated by one subject, suicide. George was reading Schopenhauer, listening to recordings of Bach, and had virtually stopped working. The old aggressiveness had gone out of his talk. Was there anything more for him to do? A biography of Marx in two or three volumes, perhaps, or a history of political thought in the 19th and 20th centuries? Others could do it as well. He would disappear when *he* wanted to, he asserted, not when the doctors said. A first attempt to take his life acted as a kind of shock therapy. He had always tended toward melancholy and pessimism, yet at the same time the will to live was still strong; he had wanted to die but now he found he wanted to live. He said that he had gotten it out of his system and would not try again. His friends half-believed him. I did not see him for two months during the spring. On Easter Monday Theodore Draper, who had had lunch with George a few days before, came to tea. We talked about George and how much better he seemed. In the middle of the conversation came a telephone call announcing that George had after all made another attempt to take his life and that this time the attempt had succeeded. He was sixty-one years old.

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The Growth of the Day-School Movement

David Singer

WRITING in these pages thirteen years ago, Milton Himmelfarb took the measure of what was then a newly emerging phenomenon on the American-Jewish scene, the Jewish day school.* Because such schools—which combine intensive Jewish instruction (usually in the morning) with general studies (usually in the afternoon), all under one roof—were at the time only beginning to make themselves felt as an institution in the Jewish community, Mr. Himmelfarb was obliged not only to describe their aims but to discuss such attendant issues as parental motivation, clashes in values between the home and the school, academic achievement levels, and so on. These issues remain central to any current discussion of the subject, but their examination today takes place under radically altered circumstances. The reason, quite simply, is that the day-school movement, once considered a marginal educational enterprise, has come of age over the years and is today an accepted and increasingly significant, if still controversial, feature of American-Jewish life. The time is therefore ripe to cast another look at the day schools and the range of issues associated with them.

It should be noted at the outset that in the course of the last thirteen years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of Jewish day schools throughout the country. Whereas in 1960 there were 237 such facilities in the United States, today (according to the most recent statistics) there are 372. Interestingly, the bulk of the new schools have sprung up outside of the Greater New York area, so that at present there are day schools in all but eight communities with a Jewish population of 5,000 or more. However, as measured by student enrollment, day schools continue overwhelmingly to be a large-city phenomenon. Nearly 90 per cent of the 75,000 pupils currently attending day schools are distributed among the ten most populous Jewish centers—in descending order, New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Chicago, Northern New Jersey, Miami, Boston, Washington, Baltimore, Cleveland—with a full two-thirds in Greater New York. Still, even outside of New York, day-school registration now constitutes 8 per cent of the total Jewish educational system (which, apart from day schools, consists of afternoon and Sunday-morning congregational schools of one kind or another). When New York is added to the picture, the figure jumps to a striking 15 per cent.

In addition to the sharp increase in size, Jewish day schools have undergone two further significant changes. High-school registration now accounts for 20 per cent of the total day-school enrollment, reflecting the fact that two-thirds of the students who have completed the eight-year elementary course have elected to continue their education under day-school auspices. Also, day schools in increasing numbers are beginning to draw their students from non-Orthodox homes: precise figures are not available, but it would appear that the proportion may run as high as one-third. This is a matter of no little significance, for day schools traditionally have been an Orthodox preserve. The development would seem to indicate that the day school is now managing to appeal to a broader spectrum of Jews than was previously the case.

The new openness to the day school on the part of non-Orthodox parents is matched at the organizational level by the entry into the day-school field of the Conservative and Reform movements. Orthodox-sponsored institutions still predominate, of course, but they no longer enjoy a monopoly. Today, there are 7,000 students registered in the Conservative day-school system (named after Solomon Schechter), a network of forty-one schools, including high schools. "The growth of the day school," according to an official Conservative statement, "will help the Conservative movement to create a reservoir of intensely educated and deeply dedicated men and women from whom the American-Jewish community can draw professional and lay leadership." Following a similar line of thought, the Reform movement, traditionally a firm advocate of public-school education, has also launched a number of day schools. Most recently, there have been efforts to establish "interdenominational" day schools to

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* "Reflections on the Day School," COMMENTARY, July 1960.

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bring together children of diverse Jewish backgrounds.

How is this growth to be explained? A large part of the answer can be traced to a loss of faith on the part of Jewish parents in the American public school. The use of the term "faith" in this connection is apposite, for a steadfast belief in public education has been part of the historic American-Jewish "creed," whose implications have been expressed by Marshall Sklare as follows:

> [His belief in public education] signified that the Jew was prepared to render unto America that which belonged to America, and that he felt he must reserve his Jewishness for his remaining life space. It meant that he would not be sectarian, insisting on special rights and privileges and asking that the public order accommodate itself to his demands. It meant that he would refrain from educating his children as sectarians. Rather, when he educated his children Jewishly he would do so on a supplementary basis so as not to interfere with public education. . . .*

For many American-Jewish parents today this "creed" has become increasingly difficult to maintain, particularly as the crisis besetting American cities has grown more acute. In its place the private Jewish day school has emerged as an attractive alternative.

Another reason for the gains made by the day schools stems from increasing dissatisfaction with traditional Jewish supplementary education, the three-day-a-week afternoon congregational schools and the one-day-a-week Sunday schools. Their deficiencies have been aptly described by Irving Greenberg: "We must reckon [with] student and teacher latenesses and absences; the ballet lessons and dentist appointments that receive first priority; the host of distractions and interruptions . . .; the fact that [such schools] are generally of marginal concern to rabbis upon whom congregations place . . . a host of other rabbinical obligations . . .; the frequent lack of commitment of teachers and administrators . . .; the frequent absence of standardized and/or properly evaluated curricula. . . ."† Given this situation, it becomes more understandable that parents who wish to provide their children with a solid Jewish education should turn to the day school, with its serious and intensive approach to the enterprise.

A third factor in the rise of the day school—one that has special application to the suburbs—can be ascribed to upward socioeconomic mobility. This factor was already noted in 1960 by Milton Himmelfarb, who referred to what he called the "trading up" aspect of the day schools. Comparing the Jewish situation to that of the Catholic community, he argued that circumstances of class and style of life could foster a perception of day-school education as a means of "showing that . . . Jews too . . . have arrived in America." Today, given the greater affluence of the American-Jewish community, a more apt comparison might be with high-prestige Wasps, but the social-climbing urge remains. For most Jews so motivated, the logical educational choice would seem to be a non-sectarian private school. In the suburbs, however, as opposed to the large metropolitan centers, the numbers and types of such institutions are limited, and many upward-striving Jewish suburban parents therefore send their children to day schools instead, with their often superior physical facilities and their "ecumenical" approach to all segments of the Jewish community. Indeed, in certain suburban communities, the "American-Jewish Eton, only coeducational and without the boarding" that Mr. Himmelfarb saw described in day-school promotional literature, is coming close to reality.

As a fourth consideration, one must take into account the widespread concern over the declining Jewish birth rate and the rising rate of intermarriage, the alienation of Jewish young people from the organized community, the much-discussed "Jewish identity crisis"—all of which can be subsumed under the current communal preoccupation with "Jewish survival." Since most Jewish parents are either unwilling or unable to assume a serious role in the fostering of Jewish identity, this task has fallen to the synagogue and the school. Among the various institutions on the American-Jewish scene the day school unquestionably possesses the greatest potential for instilling in the young a solid background in Jewish subject matters and a positive view of Jewish identity.

Finally, day schools, whether as Jewish Etons or in humbler form, have been proliferating not only for the reasons cited above but also because cadres of dedicated Jews have been busy promoting the cause. The greatest activists are to be found among the sectarian Orthodox, most notably those oriented around the Agudath Israel movement, who have played a key role in the development of the day school. This development, it should be noted, is of rather recent vintage. Contrary to popular conception, the day school was not part of the cultural baggage of the Jews who came to the United States during the great wave of East European immigration in the late 1800's and early 1900's. These Jews, as Charles Liebman has pointed out,** were in most instances only nominally Orthodox, and they eagerly embraced public-school education for their children. Thus, in 1917, when the American-Jewish population was well over three million, there were only five day schools in the entire country, with a total

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* *America's Jews*, Random House (1971), p. 20.

† "Jews or Zombies: A Hard Look at Jewish Education," in the *Jewish Advocate* (Boston), September 20, 1966, p. 4.

** "Orthodoxy in American Jewish Life," *American Jewish Year Book, 1965*, pp. 9-12.

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student enrollment of 1,000. It was not until World War II and after, when militantly traditionalist Orthodox Jews in large numbers began to enter the United States as refugees, that the day-school movement developed in any appreciable way. Largely because of their influence, the number of Jewish day schools increased from 33 in 1940 to 237 in 1960. At present, a second generation of Orthodox sectarians, for the most part Americanized and often college-trained, but no less militant, is active in Jewish affairs, spreading the word of the day school to an ever more responsive Jewish community.

II

I HAVE NOT so far attempted to distinguish carefully among the various types of Jewish day schools, but it is important to do so when we come to examine them as educational institutions. Not that specific day-school models can be correlated with distinct and explicit educational philosophies. Such philosophies, in point of fact, have yet to be articulated. But the different kinds of day schools do reflect specific approaches to modern Jewish life, and these are freighted with educational implications. It is possible in the main to delineate three types of schools: the traditional yeshiva, the modern Orthodox Hebrew day school, and the Conservative day school. The day schools associated with the Reform movement are too few in number to constitute, as yet, a separate category.

As the name suggests, the traditional yeshiva is an institution rooted in a view of Jewish life oriented to the past, and this is reflected in its educational program. Traditional yeshivot constitute approximately 35 per cent of all day schools, serving so-called "ultra" and sectarian Orthodox constituencies. While the "ultras" (the Satmar Hasidim of Williamsburg are an example) completely reject the modern Jewish experience, and the sectarians seek a pragmatic accommodation to it, both groups aspire to maintain a Jewish educational pattern that conforms as much as possible to the one that existed prior to the Emancipation of the 18th century. Thus, the traditional yeshiva is the direct heir of the classical style of Jewish study. Every effort is made to distinguish between "religious" and "secular" subjects—between sacred and profane, so to speak —with a view toward inculcating reverence for the former, and wariness, if not outright fear, of the latter.

For the traditional yeshiva, being a Jew, today as in the past, means immersing oneself in the sacred texts of Judaism. There is only one model of Jewishness to which students may aspire, the *lamdan* (master of classical Jewish sources), and they are thus introduced to biblical and then Talmudic texts at the earliest grade levels. The language of instruction is either Yiddish or English, never Hebrew, the holy tongue being deemed unsuitable for such purpose. The State of Israel, a secular creation, finds no place in the curriculum. As for general studies, these are taught in the "ultra" schools because state law requires it, and in sectarian schools because, additionally, such knowledge can provide a means to earning a living. To most American Jews, of course, all this is quite unacceptable, but in all fairness it should be noted that a greater amount of serious study takes place on all grade levels in the traditional yeshiva than in virtually any other type of American school, Jewish or non-Jewish.

To the degree that the traditional yeshiva is consistent in its educational outlook, the modern Orthodox Hebrew day school—such as Yeshiva University's system of high schools in New York—is studded with ambiguities, all of which, as may readily be guessed, arise from the effort to be at once Orthodox and modern. This is the dilemma that Samson Raphael Hirsch sought to resolve in the early 19th century, and it is one that has found no satisfactory solution to this day. Hirsch's proposed answer, *Torah im derekh eretz* (Torah in conjunction with secular knowledge), is very much the educational ideal of the modern Hebrew day school, but the rhetoric still awaits translation into reality. Schools of this type often do an admirable job of teaching such subjects as Bible, Talmud, Jewish history, and modern Hebrew literature. (All three winners of the 1973 international student Bible contest, for example, attended modern Hebrew day schools.) They also offer an excellent general education, as indicated by the remarkably large number of Merit, New York State Regents, and other prestigious scholarships garnered by their students.

In most instances, however, the modern Hebrew day schools do not provide, as Milton Himmelfarb noted, an education in which "Jewish learning . . . connects with the rest of culture." Whether this is called "integration" or "synthesis," it speaks to the need to develop in the student a unified, rather than a fragmented, personality. The modern Orthodox Hebrew day school fails in this regard, in part because it lacks the requisite curricular tools and the trained personnel; but at least as important is the absence, on a philosophical level, of multiple models of Jewishness for student emulation. The pupil in the modern Hebrew day school is encouraged to excel in general studies, but like his yeshiva counterpart, he is at the same time made aware that the ideal Jewish type is the *lamdan*. There is no exposure, as Irving Greenberg has remarked, "to an articulate example of how [the student can] serve God in his chosen calling."* As a result, many graduates of such institutions, in addition to experiencing guilt feelings, lead lives as accomplished, religiously observant, secularists.

The tensions inherent in the modern Hebrew day school are perhaps most evident at the high-school level, where students are more keenly

* "Jewish Values and the Changing American Ethic," *Tradition*, Summer 1968, p. 67.

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aware of the gulf separating their Jewish and general studies. In the typical school of this sort—one such school has as its motto, "Torah and science," inspired by Samson Raphael Hirsch—the two areas of study, Jewish and general, remain largely sealed off from each other throughout all levels. The school day is divided into two broad time segments, with the morning devoted to the study of the traditional Jewish curriculum—Pentateuch, Prophets, Talmud, and applied Jewish law—and the afternoon to the mastering of standard school offerings. The general rationale for this bifurcation is that it enhances the importance of Torah in the minds of the students. In the Jewish department the stress is almost exclusively on the comprehension of texts as interpreted by traditional Jewish commentators, with no attempt to introduce the wider world of criticism. At the same time, as previously noted, the modern Hebrew day schools seek to provide a solid grounding in the humanities and the sciences—although, apart from courses in modern Hebrew literature and Jewish history, they provide few other opportunities for "modern" Jewish study—and in fact they have produced more than their share of scholarship winners and Ivy League acceptances. It is all quite typical and all rather bewildering.

If the modern Orthodox day school is unclear as to how its students, as Jews, should come to grips with general studies, the Conservative day school, on the other hand, is uncertain as to how its students, as products of the modern age, should engage with the Jewish tradition. Because the Conservative day school is premised on a view of Judaism as an evolving historical phenomenon, it is not bound to the past in the manner of Orthodox educational institutions. Thus, in the Solomon Schechter schools the goal of "integration/synthesis" is promoted by alternating the periods of Jewish and general studies, by treating Jewish themes and issues throughout the entire curriculum, and by employing teachers with a background in both Jewish and general education. There is also less stress on the mastery of classical Jewish texts, with the emphasis instead on comprehending their essential values. However, precisely because the Conservative day school is open to change, and aspires, in the words of a leading proponent of the movement, to transmit Judaism's "moral and ethical teachings . . . without fanaticism and rigidity," it can provide its students with little guidance as to what constitutes ideal Jewishness, particularly since all possible models derived from the past assume a total commitment to traditional Jewish law. The dilemma of the Conservative day school, then, like that of Conservative Judaism itself, is how to cope with the twin issues of standards and authority.

Because of the Conservative day-school movement's adherence to a philosophy of "tradition and change," one can only wonder as to how its students interpret the purpose of their Jewish studies. For example, at one Solomon Schechter school in New York, Bible is taught by an instructor who makes frequent use of the findings of modern biblical criticism, while Talmud is taught by a rabbi who regards the Jewish legal tradition as binding. This same Talmud instructor is encouraged to make his pupils aware that "some" Jews refrain from certain activities on the Sabbath, but is discouraged from exhorting his students to observe Jewish ritual law. On the other hand, there is an insistence that all students observe the laws of *kashrut* on the school premises, and that male students keep their heads covered during hours of Jewish study. This ambivalence reflects an effort to strike a balance with the realities of much of current Jewish life and practice; even more, it reflects the basic ideological uncertainty of Conservative Judaism.

III

What of the future? It seems safe to assume that the day schools will continue to grow—despite the serious financial burdens that plague the movement today. Day-school tuition, which ranges from about $600 to $1500 per year, is insufficient to cover the spiraling costs, and the securing of outside sources of funds has become a virtual necessity. While public assistance in this area has been effectively blocked by the courts (especially by the latest Supreme Court rulings), the organized Jewish community, long neglectful of day schools, is at last coming to their aid. More and more, local Jewish Federations are departing from previous practice and beginning to allocate funds to day schools in their communities. This development, as might be expected, has been abetted by the current concern over Jewish survival and the consequent wish to give greater support to instrumentalities that foster Jewish continuity. To be sure, the actual amounts allocated thus far have been modest, but they represent major percentage increases over previous patterns of funding. (In the period of 1970-72, for instance, Dallas increased its day-school allocation by 33 per cent, Boston by 66 per cent, San Francisco by 183 per cent, and Miami by a whopping 238 per cent.) The "crisis" mentality gives no sign of abating and one can therefore expect that the day schools will continue to garner a growing share of American-Jewish communal funds.

The preoccupation with Jewish survival and Jewish identity should also serve to keep the day-school classrooms filled, with an increasing number of students being drawn from non-Orthodox homes (although it should also be acknowledged that total enrollment has levelled off since 1970, largely because almost all youngsters of Orthodox

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background already attend day schools). Moreover, the disenchantment with the public schools would seem to be irreversible, and Jewish supplementary education is not likely to improve. Many non-Orthodox parents looking for a viable educational facility for their children will choose Orthodox day schools, by reason of their greater availability. But the largest day-school growth in the 1970's will probably be registered by Conservative, Reform, and "interdenominational" schools.

The outlook for the day schools, then, is a favorable one, but the crucial question remains: what will be the nature of the education which the day schools provide? The irresolution that is evident in so many key aspects of the day school's educational program is undoubtedly aggravated by the fact that the institutions, as I have already mentioned, have been entrusted with the task of fostering Jewish identity among their charges. In traditional pre-Emancipation Jewish society, where the environment was totally Jewish, the school had only to transmit the traditional texts. Today, however, many parents who send their children to day schools are more concerned with inculcating Jewish identity than with scholastic affairs. The leaders of the day-school movement, understandably enough, have sought to make a virtue of necessity by claiming that their institutions can instill the desired Jewish consciousness, but the evidence suggests otherwise. It is not so much a question of whether or not the day school is able to shape attitudes, but rather whether its influence is powerful enough to counteract the apathetic Jewish environment that the student in all likelihood encounters outside the classroom, particularly at home. The few research studies on Jewish education that have been done indicate, as reported by Walter Ackerman, that "the influence of the school is most pronounced in imparting information; it affects basic attitudes toward Jews and Judaism and patterns of religion but slightly. . . ."* Significantly enough, this situation is precisely analogous to the one that obtains in Catholic parochial education as well.

At present, modern Orthodox and Conservative schools—the yeshivot, as traditional institutions serving a traditional clientele, are removed from this particular consideration—can legitimately claim to offer a quality education in both Jewish and general studies. This is no small accomplishment in a time of deteriorating educational standards, and it ought to be recognized as such. At the same time, it must again be emphasized that the day schools have not succeeded as well as they might in bridging the gap between classroom learning and the contemporary American and Jewish reality. It is this problem that the day schools must come to confront and solve.

* "Jewish Education—For What?" *American Jewish Year Book 1969,* p. 24.

Should the day schools succeed in meeting the educational challenge, there is no gainsaying that the quality of American-Jewish life will be immeasurably enriched; among other things, over a period of time the schools should begin to provide the community with a leadership (as well as a sizable laity) able to boast more than a smattering of Jewish knowledge. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that this will have come about through an agency that serves in some sense to isolate Jews from their fellow citizens, and thereby may be said to be contributing to the further fragmentation of American society. It can, of course, be argued that the idea of the day school is very much in keeping with the dominant social trends of the moment—from the continued assertions of black pride and black power to the resurgence of ethnic consciousness among whites and the preoccupation of many intellectuals and social analysts with the "new pluralism." Within the Jewish community itself, one can begin to note a turn inward, as its organized bodies increasingly shift their efforts to issues of specific Jewish group interest (such as Jewish poverty, or education). Why, it is being asked with greater frequency, should Jews resist the trend toward separatism, especially if separate schooling will result in a marked improvement of American-Jewish cultural life?

But that is only one side of the coin. The other side reflects the prosperity which American Jews have achieved in a society where integration rather than separatism has been the preeminent ideal. The arch symbol of that ideal is the public school, and it is small wonder that, until recently, American Jews have passionately upheld the creed of public education. The fact that this faith has now faltered does not mean that it is not worth reviving. One need only recall the unhappy experience of Jews in a host of ethnically-divided societies to appreciate such now démodé concepts as integration and the idea of a common culture, concepts inextricably linked to the public school. And there is the additional consideration that public education brings Jews into the mainstream of American life and thus closer to those levers of power which determine both individual and group status: obviously, a strong case for the public schools can be made precisely on the grounds of Jewish group interest.

With regard to the day school, resolution of this entire complex issue, whether on the part of individual parents or on the part of the Jewish community as a whole, ultimately comes down to a matter of choosing among competing values and priorities. Perhaps this is as it should be, for the necessity of choice has always been central to the modern Jewish experience—an experience of which the day school now seems to be an inextricable part.

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War Fictions

John P. Sisk

To Clausewitz war was very simple, to Stephen Crane it was kind, to General Sherman it was all hell. Clausewitz, of course, had to write a book to explain the simplicity, Crane was speaking ironically in a poem, and Sherman at times found the hell of war to be a heavenly experience. None of them, whatever he said, had much hope of eliminating war from the human scene. Those optimists who have believed that it can be eliminated have generally and of necessity traced it to a single cause—private property, episcopacy, sectarian religious enthusiasm, monarchical sovereignty, genital sexuality, population crowding, the nuclear family, male chauvinism—and often enough have been willing to go to war in order to secure the permanent peace predicted by their analyses. In the meantime, wars go on, in great part, according to William James, because "The plain truth is that people *want* war."

James was a pacifist, but a pacifist who knew why his fellow pacifists so often argued and acted futilely. They "need to enter more deeply into the aesthetical and ethical point of view of their opponents," he says in "The Moral Equivalent of War." Failing to do this, "The duties, penalties, and sanctions pictured in the utopias they paint are all too weak and tame to touch the military-minded." In James's context, to argue as if military-mindedness were entirely reprehensible is both wrong and a waste of time. One must be able to imagine a moral equivalent of war that will draw upon the virtues of the military-minded. These virtues—intrepidity, toughness without callousness, a strong sense of duty and honor, a capacity for commitment to ideals and proper authority, an ability to delay satisfaction of appetite in pursuit of a worthy objective—are the marks of the traditional man of character, a figure looked upon with more approval in James's time than ours.

There is no ambivalence about his subject in James's essay. He is simply arguing from the known strengths of the opposition, which he hopes not to discredit but to enlist in his own cause. However, he is aware of the ambivalence in the minds of other people and of the importance of facing up to it. For this reason he can help us understand the extent to which it characterizes the fictions of war in the past hundred years, and at the same time obstructs our efforts to keep the peace.

It would be hard to find a better example of that ambivalence than Hemingway. To many readers of *A Farewell to Arms, In Our Time,* and *The Sun Also Rises* he is an unqualified hater of war. As he lay wounded in Italy in 1918, says Carlos Baker, he vowed "that if he managed to get through the night alive, he would do everything in his power to prevent a future war." In 1931 he published a letter in *Esquire* in which he stated that it is demagogues and dictators playing on the patriotism of the people who make war, and in which he represents World War II as "being prepared and brought closer each day with all the premeditation of a long-planned murder." A few years later, as editor of the anthology *Men at War*, he "hates war and hates all the politicians whose mismanagement, gullibility, cupidity, selfishness and ambition brought on this present war and made it inevitable."

Yet as soon as he begins to talk about the selections in the anthology, which he offers as an aid to winning the war "at all costs and as soon as possible," it is clear that he is exuberantly at home with what he once told Scott Fitzgerald was "the best subject of all." They are all fine and true stories, and one of the finest and truest is Hemingway's own story of Evan Shipman, who when Hemingway meets him in Spain during the Civil War, "pale, ragged, limping, and profoundly cheerful," is convinced that his soldiering there "is the happiest time I ever had in my life." Hemingway might have said the same thing about his own experience as a correspondent for *Collier's* in World War II, especially after he had adopted the Twenty-second Brigade and embarked on his legendary liberation of Paris. Nothing, says Professor Baker, "could keep Ernest from enjoying the war in France." He admitted to loving combat. The killing of an enemy "appealed to his sense of manhood, espe-

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cially if he himself were in danger at the time."

One clear indication of the extent to which Hemingway is at bottom some kind of war-lover can be seen in his objection to Tolstoy's contemptuous treatment of Napoleon as a mere puppet and to the "ponderous and Messianic thinking" that led Tolstoy in *War and Peace* to tamper "with the truth in order to make it fit his conclusions"—a position later to be developed at length by Isaiah Berlin in his great "Hedgehog and Fox" study of Tolstoy's skepticism. For Hemingway, if Napoleon is to remain "one of the really great generals of the world," and if his own Robert Jordan and Colonel Robert Cantwell are not to be utterly invalidated, war cannot be meaningless chaos in which, as Tolstoy puts it, "the will of the historic hero does not control the actions of the mass but is itself continually controlled." If the hero is not possible, war cannot be the "grand and beautiful game" that General Sherman thought it was and in which Hemingway himself could feel so exuberantly alive.

For Clausewitz, war is neither meaningless chaos nor a beautiful game. "War is no pastime," he writes, "no mere passion for venturing and winning; no work of free enthusiasm: it is a serious means for a serious object." Quotations from his book serve as section headings in Hemingway's anthology, but it is not certain that Hemingway made the selections or was especially familiar with *On War*. In any event, he would not have had to read much of it to discover a thoroughly uncongenial figure. Clausewitz with his rational subordination of war to political ends takes a classic attitude toward war with respect to which Hemingway's is romantic and subversive. Who could imagine Clausewitz approving of that high-spirited bachelor party that under Hemingway's command early in World War II roamed the Caribbean searching for German submarines? Hemingway would have been more at home with a man Isaiah Berlin is convinced had a great influence on Tolstoy, Count Joseph de Maistre, who believed, says Berlin, that war "originated in some primal mysterious, sanguinary, self immolatory craving implanted by God."

Paradoxically, then, *Men at War* is no less on the side of war than General Douglas MacArthur's famous farewell address to the corps of cadets at West Point. How could it be otherwise, dedicated as the anthology is to giving instructions and information necessary to the defeat of the fascist enemy? If the book really expressed Hemingway's profound hatred of war it would be self-defeating. He is absolutely certain that "there are worse things than war, and all of them come with defeat." We will not be fooled again, he vows; we will fight "a hundred years if necessary, and no matter whom we have to fight." The sustaining prospect for such a time-defying effort (of which only a race of El Cids would be capable) is permanent peace, located sufficiently far into the future so that Hemingway can ignore the implications for him as a writer.

MacArthur is jut as adamant but needs no promise of such a pale utopia; for though he believes that the soldier prays for peace "above all other people" he also agrees with Plato that "Only the dead have seen the end of war." Lacking Hemingway's ambivalence, he is no more likely than Clausewitz to confuse the fictions of peace and war. You can even hear in his address an exaltation in the fact that the soldier is imprisoned willingly and honorifically in a war story that has no end.

II

One might say that Hemingway, too, for all his talk of peace, is preeminently a prisoner of the fiction of war, just as William Burroughs is a prisoner of the fiction of homosexual orgasm or Kerouac a prisoner of the fiction of ultimate liberation. But this is more or less true of all writers who have made war the subject of their literary or dramatic fictions, indeed, more or less true of most people who are touched by war. In the minds of men war is structured like fiction, usually melodrama, and if, like Tolstoy, you want to demonstrate that it is really all meaningless chaos (that is, bad fiction) you must enter the story in order to prove that fact and set against it a better story. Even such harrowing personal records of World War I trench warfare as those of Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon are best read as forms of fiction —not because they are unreliable but because, as the critic Northrop Frye argues, autobiography cannot avoid behaving like fiction. If, as William James contends, the plain truth is that people want war it is because war is too good a story to let go. At least three consequences would seem to follow: a nation that wants to get rid of the war habit has to be able to get rid of the story habit; a people that has no war will have no story; permanent peace implies a (warlike?) conquest of history.

The story habit itself is militaristic. Truly enough, since *War and Peace* it has been very hard to make serious literature out of a pro-war attitude. We expect the war story to make much of the horror and human waste of war, the insignificance of the individual caught up in it, the ultimate hollowness of its rhetoric, its futility in terms of its announced objectives, etc., and if it does not we smell fascism. Thus Ford Madox Ford's *No More Parades* is for us a more conventional war novel than Evelyn Waugh's *Men at Arms* since it is less likely to offend our pieties. If Maistre were alive today he would have to seek employment with the Mafia. But at the same time it has been equally difficult to create an

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anti-war fiction that does not attempt, with an effectiveness dependent upon the imaginative power of its creator, to subvert its anti-war bias. Eudora Welty once explained her childhood preference for the kind of stories she was not supposed to read by saying that in them people got into the right kind of trouble. It is the dilemma of successful war fiction, dependent as it is on extreme agonistic situations, that it gets its characters into the right kind of trouble (Hemingway would have said the best kind of trouble), so that they are interestingly displayed in a meaningful action—even though at the same time war itself may be represented as meaningless and utterly hostile to the individual. Thus *A Farewell to Arms* says that what happens to Frederic Henry is ultimately worthwhile—that it is not only interesting as a story but that there is some kind of parity between the horrors and chaos of the war and what Henry learns, or what the reader learns about Henry's act of learning, so that the whole experience is a movement toward form and light. *The Red Badge of Courage* makes the same assertion about what happens to Henry Fleming. Professor Lars Åhnebrink has said that Crane no less than Tolstoy "believed that war was not only unnecessary but completely meaningless." Nevertheless, the story as a story resists this judgment, as do all of Crane's war stories. In the end Crane says of Fleming: "He had been to touch the great death, and found that, after all, it was but the great death. He was a man." No condition that makes this statement possible is meaningless. In proportion as the statement is dramatically earned, the condition in which it is earned becomes meaningful and interesting. War really is kind—just as the ocean is kind in "The Open Boat," Crane's great "war" story of man against nature.

What I am talking about here, I suppose, is that complexity of all fictions allowed to develop on their own terms which makes it possible for Francois Mauriac to worry about the complicity of the fictionist with evil. It is with him as with the reader: the story to which he commits himself can discover attitudes, motivations, and ambivalences in him that he was previously unaware of or was convinced that he was completely in control of. Thus the fictionist runs the risk of escaping damnation as an artist by courting it as a human being: he can end up with a story rigged to propagandize his own pieties or with one that has maneuvered him into subverting some of them. The complicity that results from the writer's complex involvement with his story is a good deal of the time, no doubt, relatively honest, especially when compared to the kind of complicity that characterizes such sensational fictions as the movie version of *A Clockwork Orange* that employ their announced pieties as a justifying cover for the subversive delight of the audience or reader. Nevertheless, there is in effect and inescapably some war-loving complicity in all war fictions, and James helps us to see that in that complicity vital human issues may be at stake.

PART of the problem for the fictionists of war is that the modern treatment of war cannot be separated from what might be called the quest of realism. Positively, this is the disciplined and remorseless quest for the truth of the matter; negatively, it is the painful, shocking, disillusioning, revolting, and even comic discovery of the fraudulent, the inauthentic, the illusionary, the hypocritical, the merely perspectival. It is easy to forget what an embattled creed realism once was and the extent to which its proper paradigm was the medieval quest story—that in which the vigorously disciplined hero of dedicated nightly vigils whom no horrors can dismay goes forth intrepidly in search of a grail. The story of realism—paradoxically, since its familiar villain is a romantic false consciousness—is itself a romance, as perhaps at bottom all good stories are. It is also a kind of war story, and like war stories it is always being lured toward the pitch of melodrama. It is in war fiction, in fact, that realism has been able to indulge its often artfully concealed hunger for the kind of violent clarification of terms and agonistic purity that characterize melodrama.

One can sense the melodramatic potential of realism, as well as the thrill of combat, in such a passage as this from the *Journals* of Jules Renard, a turn-of-the-century French realist:

> It should be forbidden, under penalty of fine or even imprisonment, for a modern writer to borrow similes from mythology, to talk of harps, of lyres, of muses, of swans. Storks might pass.

This passage is almost contemporary with Crane's ironic treatment of the traditional rhetoric of war in the opening chapter of *The Red Badge of Courage*, and it anticipates that famous moment in *A Farewell to Arms* when Frederic Henry expresses his embarrassment with "the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain" and sees the rhetoric of war as an accretion of clichés. No one knew better than Tolstoy, Crane, and Hemingway that the best place to discover the significant disparity between swans and storks was the battlefield, which remains the supreme stage upon which to dramatize the realistic quest for the stark (stork-like) truth about the human condition. And what the realistic war story as a story tends to say is that the quest, however harrowing, is worthwhile and that only the faint of heart will refuse to embark on it—with the result that the storks often turn out to be swans in disguise. It was with the expectation of such a reversal that Norman Mailer became a combat soldier in the South Pacific: so

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that, as he confesses in *Advertisements for Myself*, "when I came out I would write the war novel of World War II." In the personal accounts of war the individual is overwhelmed by the storks only when the story has completely broken down—as it had for Henry James when, contemplating the coming of World War I (Gertrude Stein's "nice war"), he wrote to a friend: "I'm sick beyond cure to have lived on to see it."

War comedy can be no less guilty of complicity. It is both possible and comforting to think of comic treatments of war as deflations of the rhetoric of war and therefore on the side of peace. Certainly they are on the side of peace so far as they make possible an at least momentary escape from the brutal fact of war and an at least momentary resurgence of the conviction that war is only a violent means to peace and a return to laughter. Movies like Charlie Chaplin's *Shoulder Arms* and Karl Dane's *Rookies* performed this service in World War I, as did Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* and the Bob Hope-Eddie Bracken *Caught in the Draft* in World War II.

It should be conceded also that such fictions by making available a comedic perspective on war resist the tendency of war to establish its own perspective as an absolute—even when, as with Aristophanes's *Lysistrata*, the countering perspective is itself a kind of war story. If it is not countered, the tendency of war—especially modern war—is to enclose its public within a melodramatic fiction of war in which the alternatives are total victory or total defeat, so that it is willing, with Hemingway, to fight for a hundred years. "The unanimity of men at war is like that of a school of fish," Edmund Wilson observes in *Patriotic Gore*. In this condition the entrapping fiction can be expressed adequately in a war poster, so that we get the extended war posters of such films as Mary Pickford's *The Little American* in World War I, Bonita Granville's *Hitler's Children* in World War II, and John Wayne's *The Green Berets* in the Vietnam war. We also get books like Arthur Guy Empey's *Over the Top* (Hemingway will let no part of it contaminate his anthology) in which a painful kind of popular humor functions to reinforce the patriotic melodrama.

NEVERTHELESS, war comedy is also quite capable of ending up on the side of war. In its own way it asserts about war what Hemingway claims that his anthology does: that when you have seen it "you will know that there are no worse things to be gone through than men have gone through before." The comedy of one war prepares for the next: what has proven endurable because of the comedic perspective that abstracts the horrors from it contains the prediction that it will continue to be endurable. This is true even of attempts to satirize war. Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*, a very flawed but nevertheless very funny movie, is a good example. The hilarious farce of the opening scenes, depicting the Jewish barber's World War I experience, undercuts the rest of the picture, which continues throughout to be most entertaining when it is undercutting its own efforts to make an effective anti-war and anti-Nazi statement by opposing the military spirit to the spirit of brotherly love. Thanks to Chaplin's comic genius, the character Hinkel (Hitler) not only enlists a good deal of sympathy (he is after all the lovable tramp in disguise) but becomes the most interesting character in the film—and Chaplin, as if realizing that a desperate attempt at salvage is necessary, must end with an impassioned but dramatically absurd plea for universal brotherhood. The 1939 audiences that saw the picture as a devastating attack on Hitler and totalitarianism were simply stretching it on the rack of their own pieties. It is the same kind of threat to totalitarianism that the television series *Hogan's Heroes* was.

Similarly, the movie *M*A*S*H* suffered as satire from the very preoccupations of the 60's that helped to make it a box-office success. Its satiric force was directed against bureaucratic red tape, not the military spirit, so that it picked up where *See Here, Private Hargrove* left off in World War II. The anti-establishment pieties of the 60's kept audiences from seeing that it was disguised bedroom farce in the tradition of the Victor McLaglen-Edmund Lowe World War I comedies, and that, like them, it represented military life in wartime as an erotic male playground. I am surprised that it hasn't occurred to someone in the Pentagon to exploit it as a recruitment film.

A few years earlier *Dr. Strangelove* had benefited hugely from the conviction that it was a devastating attack on the fanatical and fascist single-mindedness of the military spirit. But you cannot effectively attack a subject at *Strangelove*'s level of comic hyperbole—not even, in the view of many perceptive readers, if you are Dean Swift; you can only make an entertainment that ends up taking some of the heat off what you think you are attacking. The Pentagon is as safe from *Strangelove* as Hitler was from *The Great Dictator*—and, one might add, as the human race is from Book IV of *Gulliver's Travels*. The film undercuts any claim to real humanitarian concern that might be made for it by failing to attack its "evil" in behalf of a substantial client: the human race that is blown up at the end of it is clearly not worth being saved. What the film does is make the idea of the bomb endurable by resisting its attempts to overwhelm the human imagination, which may be important enough so long as there is reason to believe that it must be endured; but at the same time it predicts and helps prepare for a bomb-dominated future which, hopefully, will also prove to be endurable. Meanwhile, those who believe that we ought to be doing something about the bomb have reason to accuse the film of complicity with it.

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III

But complicity, to repeat, may be nothing more than an effect of story-making. If you create a Falstaff and let him behave according to the laws of his own being you risk being accused of complicity by those for whom such a subversive force ought never to be allowed that much freedom. James, I think, would consider it the wrong term altogether for the attraction to war that is so clear a factor in fictions that otherwise appear to be anti-war. For him war is itself a dramatic expression of alluring values. "The war party is assuredly right in affirming that the martial virtues, although originally gained by the race through war, are absolute and permanent goods," he says, anticipating Konrad Lorenz. "There is nothing to make one indignant in the mere fact that life is hard, that man should toil and suffer pain. The planetary conditions once for all are such, and we can stand it." Ideals of hardihood, of which militarism is "the great preserver," are therefore crucial "and human life with no use for hardihood would be contemptible." Thus permanent peace is unthinkable "unless the states pacifically organized preserve some of the old elements of army discipline." Hence the pointlessness of trying to persuade modern man against war by showing war's irrationality and horror. "The horrors make the fascination. War is the *strong* life; it is life *in extremis*," and he who wants to end war must understand with what good reason men fear "to see the supreme theater of human strenuousness closed."

It is the lure of hardness, of the *ascesis* of war that the fictions of war testify to. This is as true of Graves's *Good-bye to All That* and Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* as it is of Empey's *Over the Top*. Empey was an American who served in the trenches with the British early in World War I, was wounded there and returned home to lecture and write. His book is an avowed attempt to sell the American people on the "nobility, truth, and justice of the Allies' cause." Given this propagandistic intent, one might expect him to minimize the horrors. But as a matter of fact he records the same creature discomforts and horrors as do Graves, Sassoon, and Erich Maria Remarque, although fewer of them since his period of service was shorter, and of course there is the important difference of perspective and style. It simply does not occur to Empey, quite rightly, as James might say, that the discomforts and horrors will hurt his propaganda. By the same token, the discomforts and horrors in the fictions of World War I that began to appear in the middle and late 20's—in *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *A Farewell to Arms*, for instance, and in films like *The Big Parade, Journey's End*, and *What Price Glory?*—did not enhance their effectiveness as anti-war propaganda.

"It takes courage to be shaken to one's depths," says Karl Jaspers, "and to know what the extreme situation reveals." The fictions of war seem to agree that there is some powerful need in men (analyze it how you will) that drives them to place themselves in extreme situations where they can be shaken to the depths as their hardihood and courage are tested, and to accept in preparation for the testing the most rigorous discipline of the sensuous, egotistic self. Speaking of Mailer's participation in World War II, Chester E. Eisinger observes that Mailer "was testing himself to discover if, as a young intellectual, he had the courage and endurance for war." The need to know this about oneself is a great part of what is behind the cliché that drives anti-militarists mad: the army makes a man of you. Under the strain of the man-making many of course complain, malinger, dream of being safely wounded and so honorably excused; some buckle, desert, go mad, or are scarred for life; some rebel and shoot their officers. But a significant number of those who survive, the fictions of war say or imply, will remember the time of testing as a golden and meaningful one when they were shaken to their depths and not found wanting, even though the experience may otherwise have been as chaotic and meaningless as the Napoleonic war was for Tolstoy.

Saint, athlete, lover, and soldier come together here as fictional heroes *par excellence* who courageously accept the *ascesis* of the extreme situation. Each has something of the others, can become a metaphor for the others. You can hear this coincidence of metaphors in Che Guevara's last letter to his parents prior to his departure for the ill-fated Bolivian campaign: "Once again I feel Rosinante's bony ribs beneath my legs. Again I begin my journey carrying my shield." But perhaps T.E. Lawrence is a better example since he has written one of the great war books, and especially since Robert Graves has made it possible to see *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* as the expression of a mystical devotion to a *Son Altesse* ("Her Highness") who "sustained the troubador servant through perils and hardships as he went on crusade."

It is a waste of time to try to understand Guevara and Lawrence by trying to fit them into Clausewitz's world. Mailer's General Cummings or the darkly theological Maistre would have made more sense to them. "Is not War merely another kind of writing and language for political thoughts?" Clausewitz asks. As the question might suggest, he was basically a staff officer, and his book gives no indication that he ever felt the thrill of Rosinante's bony ribs; probably he would not have been able to distinguish *Son Altesse* from the nearest camp trollop. Lawrence's magic combination of love and war could only have been anachronistic to one whose aim was to rationalize war to political ends. Clausewitz is of course an extoller of hardness, for "War is the

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province of physical exertion and suffering" in which "a certain strength of body and mind is required," and when this qualification is "under the guidance of simply a strong understanding, a man is at once a proper instrument for War." This is no doubt true enough, but it is not especially relevant to the meaning of hardness in the fictions of war.

Better to read the life of St. Anthony, the first of those who retired strenuously to the Egyptian desert, knowing that "the whole earth set over against heaven's infinite is scant and poor"; better to contemplate the meaning of hardness in the life and work of Wittgenstein, who said of his own service in World War I that he had never been bored; better to see what hardness meant to Thoreau and Gandhi, who belong in the pacifist camp but whose capacity to be hard ranks them with Anthony and Lawrence as soldiers of the spirit. "He is blessed who is assured that the animal is dying out in him day by day, and the divine being established," Thoreau writes in *Walden*. The whole book can be read as a successful military campaign against "that cause for shame," that "inferior and brutish nature to which he is allied." He admits the feral in himself; there are times when he could devour a woodchuck raw; nevertheless, says this Clausewitz of the higher laws, nature "is hard to be overcome, but she must be overcome." Gandhi agreed, and so at the age of thirty-seven he began to practice the celibate restraint of *brahmacharya*, convinced that it had a positive power-enhancing function to compel the environment.

The writer as writer belongs in this elite company of those whose efforts demand the soldier's rigorous discipline since they are meant to be exercised against fierce opposition. T.S. Eliot expresses the military nature of the writer's effort in a famous passage in "East Coker":

And so each venture
Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate
With shabby equipment always deteriorating
In a general mess of imprecision of feeling,
Undisciplined squads of emotion. And what there is to conquer
By strength and submission, has already been discovered
Once or twice, or several times, by men whom one cannot hope
To emulate—but there is no competition—
There is only the fight to recover what has been lost
And found and lost again and again: and now, under conditions
That seem unpropitious.

One could just as easily go to Flaubert or Thoreau or Proust or Joyce or Conrad or Kafka or Hemingway or Crane for supporting texts since the ascetic commitment of the artist-soldier is by now no less a commonplace than is that counter-image of the artist as an intransigent cultivator of impulse. Crane, whose hardness of character Conrad admired, might be speaking for all of them when he says in a letter to John Northern Hiliard that *The Red Badge* was "an effort born of pain . . . a child born of suffering." He concedes that "there are fine writers who have good incomes and live comfortably and contentedly; but if the conditions of their lives were harder, I believe that their work would be better." Even Bertrand Russell, that ardent advocate of tame utopias, agreed that for the artist "some degree of hardship is not objectionable"—though he would hardly have agreed with what so many writers say or imply about themselves as artists: that their natural habit is warlike just as their natural effort is soldierlike.

War is a state in which the hardened self crosses over into wilderness to measure itself against elemental force. In war fictions this is an act of definition and discovery, though it is also an egotistic assertion. In Thoreau's war book the "Spartan-like simplicity of life" in which the crossing over and measuring happen is the result of a determination "to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life . . . to put to rout all that is not life . . . to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms" in order to know by experience the truth about it, whether it is mean or sublime: in Jaspers's terms, to know what the extreme situation reveals. His book is proof that he saw more clearly and experienced more purely and intensely in this exigency. This is no less true of Crane, Hemingway, Graves, Sassoon, and Remarque, with the difference that they are in environments where woodchucks are eaten raw as a matter of course. For all the numbing effect of physical misery and reiterated horror, there remains for them that sharpening of the senses, that capacity for a near ecstatic experience of the commonplace, that opening of the doors of perception to the most elemental facts about one's quotidian bodily existence: food, drink, heat, cold, rest, color, texture, smell, taste. Sassoon writes in *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*: "One's mind eliminates boredom and physical discomfort, retaining an incomplete impression of a strange, intense, and unique experience." Characters in good war stories seem to themselves and to readers to have lived on a different time-scale, to have crammed several lifetimes into days or weeks, to have quickly, if often tragically, left chronological youth far behind them, so that later it seems to them that there was something fabulous, however harrowing, in lives of such intense and high definition. And the horrors which James says are part of the thrill are also part of the mechanism of definition. It is no wonder that when Sassoon, Graves, and Paul Baumer of *All Quiet* are on leave from combat zones they are so often at loose ends and bored.

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IV

But in the fictions of war a no less important discovery is that of one's brother or lover in the extreme death-confronting situation. It is this intense sense of communion with one's squad, crew, platoon, or company that seems more than any other factor to be the cause of self-transcending heroic acts, just as it is the absence of this sense that makes the furloughed or discharged soldier a stranger in a strange land. Sassoon is simply giving us a commonplace of war fiction when he remarks that "the man who had really endured the war at its worst was everlastingly differentiated from everyone except his fellow soldiers." When he and the young Robert Graves return voluntarily from England to the trenches, knowing the horror of them, one suspects that it is not because they are addicted to war but because they have become addicted to a kind of comradeship they have known only in war. This is why Paul Baumer after being seriously wounded is really glad to return to the trenches and to what is left of his gang; and life really ends for him when he discovers that Katczinsky, whom he believes he has carried to safety, is actually dead.

There is no better popular "proof" of the extent to which the discovery of comradeship more than compensates for the discomforts and horrors of war than the motion-picture treatment of the two world wars. The airplane films of the late 20's —*The Dawn Patrol, The Legion of the Condemned, Wings,* etc.—are especially good examples, not only because of the exotic nature of air warfare in World War I but because of the emphasis on small groups bound together romantically in high-risk enterprises and in contexts that made the heroic credible. Such films were much more effective as war propaganda than films like *The Green Berets* or *The Bridges at Toko-ri,* in the latter of which the pilot-hero's death in the Korean war is compensated for by his conviction that he is making a worthwhile patriotic contribution. Modern fictions of war, in fact, tend to take a dim view of this kind of compensation, if they acknowledge it at all. Patriotism, however innocent, is the wrong kind of piety; its conspicuous presence in Empey's book damns it for Hemingway. Patriotism as a motivation is for civilians to cherish and soldiers to discover the illusion of. Patriotism, as the young Robert Graves discovers among English civilians, tends in the melodramatic crucible of war to become fanaticism, which for the soldier is a caricature of that true erotic relationship that comradeship is.

Sexual passion too gets high definition in wartime contexts, so that some of the greatest love stories are war stories. War intensifies passion, speeds it up, dispenses it from institutional controls, supplies the extreme refining situation in which, however poignantly brief, it is made "pure"—whether pure as we see it in Hemingway's war stories or in war comedies like the McLaglen-Lowe *The Cockeyed World* and *M*A*S*H,* in both of which war by affording the male his erotic playground becomes a kind of pastoral. *Son Altesse* is a lady of war, as both Robert Graves and Denis de Rougemont agree, but so is Lili Marlene and so are Catherine Barkley of *A Farewell to Arms* and Maria of *For Whom the Bell Tolls.* If the latter and Robert Jordan can never know peacetime domestic bliss, neither will they ever know the longueurs that must be endured once lovers move out of their ecstatic wartime fiction. Like the lovers on Keats's Grecian urn, they remain forever happy—

> *Forever warm and still to be enjoyed,*
> *Forever panting and forever young. . . .*

What James might have said about love and war has to be inferred from his recognition of the romantic appeal of war; nevertheless, the fictions of war make it clear that man's fear "to see the supreme theater of human strenuousness closed" includes the fear that if war goes, Eros in some of its most attractive aspects will go too, that in the tame utopia no force will remain to tighten down the screws of passion.

V

"Great indeed is Fear," James concludes, "but it is not, as our military enthusiasts believe and try to make us believe, the only stimulus known for awakening the higher range of man's spiritual energy." Nevertheless, to great numbers of the anti-military party today the essay is as unacceptable as Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents,* and for many of the same reasons. In *Science and Sentiment in America* Morton White sees James as representing the triumph of romanticism in American thought, but if so it is a romanticism that often comes across to us as unromantically severe. James wrote his essay in 1910, before permissiveness, before the myth of the affluent society, before Inner-Directed Man had been sabotaged by Protean Man and Transgressive Man—when it was still possible to assume in his readers a good deal of skepticism about the utopian promises they would have encountered in books like Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward,* H.G. Wells's *A Modern Utopia,* and William Morris's *News from Nowhere.* "A permanently successful peace economy," he says, "cannot be a simple pleasure economy." He has as little use for weaklings and mollycoddles as Theodore Roosevelt had, believing that "human life with no use for hardihood would be contemptible." He advocates the forced military conscription "of the whole youthful population to form for a certain number of years a part of the army enlisted against *Nature.*" As a result, our "gilded youths" would "get the childishness knocked out of them . . . and come back into society with healthier sympathies and soberer ideas."

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One might say that James wants to replace the fictions of war with fictions of peace that, because they assume the absolute good of hardness, are still much too warlike. Our own fictions of peace tend to be happy-ending melodramas in which utopia, tame or otherwise, assumes a once-and-for-all putting down of these parties that champion hardness. In *The Dialectic of Sex* Shulamith Firestone previsions this condition after a fashion that by the end of 60's had become a stereotype. It would entail the elimination of dirty work "in favor of (complex) play, actively done for its own sake, by both adults and children. Love and sexuality would be reintegrated, flowing unimpeded." The revolt against the biological family would bring on a Messianic age in which humanity's "double curse" of toil and childbearing would be undone, because "We now have the knowledge to create a paradise on earth anew." In the process of arriving at such a goal, the gilded youth Abbie Hoffman warns, "A good many people will have to change their ideas on competition *vs.* cooperation, work *vs.* play, postponement of pleasure *vs.* instant gratification."

As James emphasizes throughout his essay, no party champions hardness more conspicuously, or is more opposed to instant gratification, than the military. What he helps us see now, therefore, is the extent to which the opposition to the Vietnam war was complicated by the fact that many people (not all of them in the counter-culture) were less against the war than they were against the military spirit, whether they encountered it in the army or elsewhere—though some of them were capable of admiring it at a safe distance when it appeared, perhaps terminologically deodorized, in the enterprises of Chairman Mao or Fidel Castro. To them this spirit, with its Jamesean conviction about the folly of trying to build a world around undisciplined, untoughened human beings, was *contra naturam* and life-denying—not a way to make men but a way of denying them their full human potential.

But the life-affirmers are apparently driven no less than the rest of us by the human need of agonistic story situations in which values can be dramatically defined, refined, and pursued; and in terms of this need the Vietnam war was a great convenience to the anti-military party, as any war would have been. It supplied an enemy and kept it in full view under the best possible circumstances (widespread disbelief that this was a good war) and at the best possible time (when counter-cultural and other anti-establishment forces were in a state of relatively high morale—spoiling, one might say, for a fight). The result was a melodrama, the real issue of which was below the surface, and in the intensity of which the anti-military party often became extremely warlike, and of necessity then practiced both the virtues and the vices of the military-minded. Thus it was possible to be hard against the evil ethos of hardness, to the confusion of the fictions of peace and war and to the further validation of James's contention that people really want war. "What if when they called a war no one went?" Abbie Hoffman asks, but the familiar picture of him on the cover of his book, leaping ecstatically high with rifle in hand, shows what an idle question it can be. *Revolution for the Hell of It*, "written with the hope of destroying Amerika," is as much a war book as Empey's *Over the Top*.

THE confusion of the fictions of peace and war is an indication of the extent to which the party of peace can come to depend on the party of war to define and energize itself; it is also a connivance on the side of war. Worse than that; from James's point of view the peace lover who identifies peace with a putting down of the military virtues is, because of the "planetary conditions," doomed to fight in a hopeless cause while so conniving. Now for instance, despite the ending of the Vietnam war and the well-publicized softening of the army, it must be all too apparent to the anti-military peace-lovers that the world is not going to turn upside down in the foreseeable future and that the utopia beyond hardness is as distant as ever. Indeed, such a utopia must seem as distant as it does to those Chinese who now understand that for Mao Permanent Revolution means not the full achievement of the social conditions they aspire to but an unremitting struggle against the forces of darkness that oppose it.

In the view of some extreme anti-militarists, of course, the confusion of peace and war means a contamination of the fictions of peace, and they derive little comfort from the promise that Abbie Hoffman's rifle is merely an *ad hoc* instrument. It is easy therefore to understand the appeal of the decontaminated or "pure" fiction of peace. Robert Jay Lifton reports on one of these, an elaborate collective fantasy known to American soldiers in Vietnam as the Alice Story. Alice is a middle-aged dumpy woman traveling in a psychedelically-decorated jeep loaded with dope and other good things —a Mother Courage figure "who gaily distributes her wares in the midst of war . . . whose mission is to replace war with pleasure . . . with marvelously charmed life."

All pure fictions of peace tend to be Alice stories from which hardness has been permanently eliminated because there is no longer anything to be hard against. The fictions of war all agree that war is a breeding ground for such stories. There are several in *All Quiet on the Western Front; The Naked and the Dead* is full of them. Both *A Farewell to Arms* and *Across the River and into the Trees* represent ultimately doomed attempts to make Alice stories come true. *M*A*S*H* uses the methods of farce to suggest that deep within the military spirit itself lies an Alice story waiting to be liberated by those high-spirited enough to com-

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mit themselves to the task. *The Red Badge of Courage* ends ironically with Henry Fleming's captivation by an Alice story—his vision of "an existence of soft and eternal peace." Timothy Leary's "turn on, tune in, drop out" was both invitation to and prescription for a "hedonistic revolution" the consequence of which would have been an Alice world. In it, he once promised *Playboy* readers, free pleasure would replace painful duty, joyful expression would replace repressive control, and doing what comes naturally would replace social conditioning. Indeed, the past decade was in one of its most characteristic efforts an exuberant if uncoordinated effort to make Alice queen of the entire country under circumstances in which Gandhi's and Thoreau's *brahmacharya* would have been proscribed as subversive and Rosinante sold to the knacker.

Alice stories are survival or escape fictions; what can be said for and against them is what can be said for and against fantasy generally. No doubt it is neither possible nor even desirable to be completely free of them; perhaps the conviction that one is completely free of them is itself a sign of dangerous delusion. As stories, however, their weakness is that they are not the autonomous fictions they are so easily mistaken for but satellite fictions that depend for their interest on the tension between them and the agonistic complexes of the larger fictions of which they are a part. Their charm lies not in themselves but in their interrelationship with those larger fictions, most conspicuously with those elements in the latter which they attempt to negate. The effort to detach an Alice story and have it pure can have unfortunate psychological, sociological, and political consequences, but it can also be aesthetically disastrous. In the detached Alice story people do not get into the right kind of trouble—or, as Timothy Leary has demonstrated in his own person, the attempt to live out the Alice story results in another kind of trouble that makes another story altogether: one in which hardness comes into its own again. The irony of the detached Alice story is that in the demoralization that results from its breakdown its characters are easy victims to the untempered hardness of the larger and more militant action they have tried to escape from.

James might have said that the weak and tame utopias of the anti-military peace party are the detached Alice stories in their heads. What he does say is that "Without risks or prizes for the darer, history would be insipid indeed." He would have seen Leary's vision of the gilded young "joyously rejecting the Protestant work ethic" and "initiating the leisure-time life of the future" as the expression of an adolescent effort to get beyond fiction and history. His clear inference is that, fiction and history being interdependent, the effort to detach Alice stories in order to have them pure is a separation of the fictions of peace and war that can be just as dangerous as the confusion of the two. The best fiction of peace, in other words, will never be pure because, like Aristophanes's *Lysistrata*, it will be metaphorically a war story.

It is the limitation to the alternatives of literal or metaphoric war that makes James's position so difficult for us. He tells us that we must find a way to be peace-lovers without being hardness-haters, otherwise we will never be hard enough to resist the enervating blandishments of utopia or the humanly wasteful fascinations of literal war. What he wants is a fiction of peace that our war-practiced culture is poorly prepared to write or read. In this exigency, this essay may not persuade us to adopt his moral equivalent of war, but it may at least keep reminding us of the bad stories we tell ourselves in an effort to secure peace.

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Reading Lionel Trilling

Irving Howe

THE Italian novelist Ignazio Silone once remarked that most writers keep telling the same story over and over again: it is the story that releases their controlling sense of existence, their springs of anxiety and dilemma. Critics may seem to enjoy greater possibilities for dispersing or disguising their deepest interests, but that is probably a mere illusion. Those who are truly engaged with the movements of their own minds also keep telling the same "story," returning to a single question or group of questions.

For several decades now Lionel Trilling has written on a wide range of topics, yet in most of his criticism there keeps breaking out a dispute of his inner mind, so that in reading his essays one becomes witness to a drama of self-recognition. An essay of perhaps a decade ago, "On the Teaching of Modern Literature," brought this dispute to a sharpness unusual for a critic who generally prefers the canny pleasures of the tangent. In that essay Trilling exposed a dualism of response that many other literary people feel but few care to state. There is the Trilling who teaches, writes about, and defines himself culturally through the modernist masters, writers of the oblique, perverse, complex, problematic. This Trilling responds to the violence, the moral chaos proudly thrust forward, the refusal of simple virtues or verities, the negation of worn or indeed any certainties, all of which we know to be the glory of our literature.

But another Trilling makes himself heard, a little weary with the suave virtuosities of the first one, more and more ironic toward the performance of ironies that has become the set-piece of the "advanced" critic, falling back with some didactic bravado on the moral assurances of 19th-century writers. This second Trilling seems to wonder—he cannot suppress the heresy, and then finds relief in venting it, since that defines *his* authenticity—whether the whole modernist enterprise will turn out to have been a brilliant detour of Western culture from which, at great cost, we may have to find a path of return.

Whereupon the first Trilling has his answers, for he knows how conclusive have been the historical imperatives behind modernism and he will not brook a retreat into limp traditions that we can still name but do not really possess. He is a resourceful man, this first Trilling, and he finds himself suspicious of his "archaic" alter ego.

From our quarrels with others we make rhetoric, said Yeats, and from our quarrels with ourselves, poetry. He might have added, criticism too, first-rate criticism, from our quarrels with ourselves. Lionel Trilling's new book, *Sincerity and Authenticity*,* which consists of six lectures delivered a few years ago at Harvard, is deceptively modest in scale, though tremendously ambitious in reach. It leaps, without pretense of transition, from one crucial moment to another in the history of Western culture; it offers no explicit conclusions or theses in the course of sketching the turn from sincerity to authenticity as guiding cultural norms—a method bound to trouble minds like my own, captive to at least the illusion of historical continuity and thematic connection. But *Sincerity and Authenticity* is a wonderful book, precisely in its tentativeness, the way it perches at a given historical moment to dramatize through variations a deep, abiding theme—the book might have been called *Six Ways of Looking at a Blackbird.* Tantalizing, exasperating, elusive, it is still a book completely alive.

Novelists and poets, familiar in the Trilling cast, are brought in to testify; so too philosophers like Hegel and Diderot; ideologues like Rousseau, Marx, and Sartre; and, of course, Freud. One can read the book for its recurrent pleasures of local insight: a clever section on Oscar Wilde's defense of the truth of masks as against the self-deceits of sincerity; a moving passage in which Trilling asks himself whether the enormous moral credence, tantamount to a religious yielding, which some of us have placed in literature may not prove to be undone by a "proliferation of art" transforming it into a trivial commodity; and an uncharacteristically fierce polemic against Sartre and Sarraute for the haughtiness with which in the name of authenticity they attack figures, indeed people, like Emma Bovary.

TRILLING begins by remarking that there are moments in history when the assumptions of moral life suddenly become subject to intense scrutiny and radical transformation. One such moment, crucial to the whole subsequent experience of Western civilization, occurs as the post-Renaissance concern with the value of sincerity, "the avoidance of being false to any man through being true to one's own self." The "congruence between avowal and actual feel-

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ing" becomes in Europe a passion, even a craze, toward the end of the 18th century, by no means confined to the intelligentsia. Yet this has certainly not always been a crucial or even recognizable norm of conduct. As Trilling puts it:

> We cannot say of the patriarch Abraham that he was a sincere man. That statement must seem only comical. The sincerity of Achilles or Beowulf cannot be discussed: they neither have nor lack sincerity. But if we ask whether the young Werther is really as sincere as he intends to be, or which of the two Dashwood sisters, Elinor or Marianne, is thought by Jane Austen [in *Sense and Sensibility*] to be the more truly sincere, we can confidently expect a serious response in the form of opinions on both sides of the question.

In time, however, the cult of sincerity, with its program for harmony within the self and *thereby* without, gives way (I would think with the rise of modernist literature) to a celebration of the inharmonious state of authenticity. Indeed, authenticity is usually regarded as possible only to those who have discarded the delusion of wholeness, and in whom the relation between me and myself is not harmonious. This relation must also be, for the program of authenticity, close to self-contained, so that the inner, fragmented struggle for definition or recreation is uncontaminated by social constraints. A similar expectation operates in regard to the work of literature:

> [It] is itself authentic by reason of its entire self-definition: it is understood to exist wholly by the laws of its own being, which include the right to embody painful, ignoble, or socially inacceptable subject-matters. Similarly the artist seeks his personal authenticity in his entire autonomousness—his goal is to be as self-defining as the art-object he creates. . . . When, in Sartre's *La Nausée,* the protagonist Roquentin . . . permits himself to entertain a single hope, it is that he may write a story which will be "beautiful and hard as steel and make people ashamed of their existence."

Now, all this may seem abstract and unanchored, as in summary form it must, but Trilling takes pains to show the interweaving and diverging paths of his two categories as they are embodied in the movement of Western culture —or at least, he shows some crucial points along the graph of their development. Perhaps the clearest exposition appears in a chapter called "The Honest Soul and the Disintegrated Consciousness," devoted mainly to Hegel and Diderot. Starting with a text that has long fascinated him, Diderot's *Rameau's Nephew,* Trilling contrasts the *Moi* of that great dialogue, Diderot himself, the "honest soul" who lives for the moderate virtues of sincerity, with young Rameau, the *Lui,* scoundrel and scapegrace who boasts of his crimes in order—quite as if he were our contemporary—to solicit admiration for the candor, the shining authenticity, with which he confesses them. Hegel, entranced by Diderot's book, uses the epithet "honest" in its

> old condescending sense, implying a limitation both of mind and power. The "honesty" of Diderot-*Moi,* which evokes Hegel's impatient scorn, consists in his wholeness of self, in the directness and consistency of his relation to things, and in his submission to a traditional morality. Diderot-*Moi* does not exemplify the urge of Spirit to escape from the conditions which circumscribe it and to enter into an existence which will be determined by itself alone.

And again:

> I have remarked the obvious connection between sincerity and the intensified sense of personal identity that developed along with the growth of the idea of society. Sincerity was taken to be an element of personal autonomy; as such, it was felt to be what we might call a progressive virtue. But considered in the light of Hegel's historical anthropology, it must be regarded in the opposite way, as regressive and retrospective, standing between the self and the disintegration which is essential if it is to develop its true, its entire, freedom.

For Hegel, anticipating many writers of our own moment, feels that only by cracking the facade of coherence, integrity, and sincerity of "the honest soul" can the reality of fragments (as we might call it) be reached.

The opposition so beautifully dramatized by Diderot appears, in somewhat different variants, as the two sides of Rousseau, who speak both for "honest consciousness" and "disintegrated consciousness," with particular reference, as Trilling is quick to underscore, to the problem of the moral value of art. In another chapter called "The Heroic, the Beautiful, the Authentic" Trilling is at his most brilliant, but incomplete and difficult, as he contrasts the pedagogic intent of narrative with the heroic gesture of tragedy, the traditional view that beauty inheres in the design of art with that "settled antagonism to beauty" which authenticity, as a tacit polemic against historical continuity, brings to bear upon art. Each section of this essay is highly suggestive, but all together they do not, at least for me, cohere into a sustained argument.

In his concluding essay, "The Authentic Unconscious," Trilling touches on the contemporary implications of his study. There is a discussion of Freud, which I find deeply absorbing but finally recalcitrant—when we reach the point where a segment of the ego is said to overlap the unconscious, it becomes hard to share Trilling's patient readiness to follow step by step the journey of the master. More accessible by far is an amiable, even touching polemic against Herbert Marcuse, with whom Trilling nevertheless finds some ground for kinship, since it turns out that Marcuse, though prophesying in his more utopian writings "the virtual end of necessity, discovers in it a perverse beneficence—upon its harsh imperatives depends the authenticity of the individual and his experience." Marcuse, as Trilling notices with a sly friendliness, "*likes* people to have 'character,'

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cost what it may in frustration. He holds fast to the belief that the right quality of human life, its intensity, its creativity, its felt actuality, its weightiness, requires the stimulus of exigence." Anyone who has ever had an encounter with the author of *Eros and Civilization* can testify to the keenness of this description.

With R.D. Laing, Trilling is harsher, and rightly so, since Laing has a much simpler mind than Marcuse. Laing is ready, at least in his writings, to go all the way into the chaos of the "disintegrated consciousness," and it is with regard to Laing's frivolous evocation of madness that Trilling reaches the conclusion of his book:

> Perhaps exactly because the thought [that "alienation is to be overcome only by the completeness of alienation"] is assented to so facilely, so without what used to be called seriousness, it might seem that no expression of disaffection from social existence was ever so desperate as this eagerness to say that authenticity of personal being is achieved through an ultimate isolateness. . . . The falsities of an alienated social reality are rejected in favor of an upward psychopathic mobility to the point of divinity, each one of us a Christ—but with none of the inconveniences of undertaking to intercede, of being a sacrifice, of reasoning with rabbis, of making sermons, of having disciples, of going to weddings and to funerals, of beginning something and at a certain point remarking that it is finished.

Despite my attempts in that direction, *Sincerity and Authenticity* is a book that is essentially beyond summary, because its value consists largely in detailed nuance and variation from chapter to chapter. Let me try, instead, to push the distinction between sincerity and authenticity to a point of high focus, perhaps overfocus, in ways that Trilling might not always approve, and with the end of bringing into the glare of the explicit some of the implications I gather from his book.

Sincerity involves aspiration, an effort to live by a moral norm; authenticity directs us to a putative truth about ourselves that depends on our "essential" being, "beneath" and perhaps in disregard of moral norms—though it demands that we drive toward that "essential" being with an imperiousness that is very much akin to traditional moralism. Sincerity implies a living up to, authenticity a getting down into. Sincerity is a social virtue, a compact between me, myself, and you; authenticity is an assertion, a defiance, a claim to cut away the falsities of culture. It takes two to be sincere, only one to be authentic. Sincerity speaks for a conduct of *should*; authenticity for a potential of *is*. Sincerity is a virtue of public consciousness, authenticity a repudiation of its bad faith. Sincerity implies a recognition of our limits, authenticity asserts the self as absolute. We are to be persuaded toward sincerity, but stripped, shocked, and shamed into authenticity. And—though Trilling avoids these linkings—sincerity strikes me largely as an attribute of Romanticism, authenticity as a straining of modernism.

Now, in truth, there are no such sharp distinctions between the two, nor is it mere carelessness that allows us in ordinary speech to use them, at times, interchangeably. For as Trilling shows, historically there has been a slide from one to the other, and the compartments of discourse are not always respected in the development of actuality. What the passion for sincerity and the search for authenticity share, and what makes them first cousins within the family of modern sensibility, is their common if tacit dismissal of the premise of objective truth. To be true to oneself replaces being true to the truth. Authenticity is a brilliant if often destructive bastard offspring of sincerity, and sincerity a token of that "psychology of exposure" through which the 19th century unmasked itself, or thought it was unmasking itself. The triumph of literary modernism is signalled by a shift from impersonal truth to personal sincerity, from belief in objective law to search for unimpeded response. The first of these involves an effort to apprehend the nature of the universe; the second an effort to apprehend the nature of our inner being. Sincerity becomes a defense for men losing religious belief, authenticity *the term for destroying absolutes*, systems, moral claims. Nor is it an accident that the quest for the reality about our selves should eventually lead to a nagging, violent attack upon the self—just as the desire of the "honest soul" to be faithful to the commonplace virtues has led, through the cunning of history, to a modernist contempt for ordinary consciousness, ordinary life, ordinary people, all dismissed as "inauthentic" (or "two-dimensional"). One of Trilling's most forceful passages is a comment on Nathalie Sarraute's dismissal of Emma Bovary:

> . . . this poor, doomed Emma, although inauthenticity certainly does touch her, is not a being of no actuality or worth whatever. . . . She has a degree of courage, although of an imprudent sort, an attractive presence, a sexuality which is urgent when once it is aroused, an imagination which kindles to the idea of experience . . . and a will to overcome the nullity of her existence. . . . Mme. Sarraute [cannot] give the forlorn creature even a wry compassion. A similar harshness of judgment informs Mme. Sarraute's fiction, beginning with her first book, *Tropismes*, a work which induces us to wonder why this gifted and imperious author should choose as the objects of her fierce discernment such *little* and, so to speak, merely incidental persons as she depicts. . . . Why does she descend from the height of her privileged state of being to make explicit her disgust at the nothingness of these persons who, as the title of the work proposes, are not persons at all?

Apart from the issues it raises, *Sincerity and Authenticity* is a deeply interesting book by reason of making clear the controlling concerns of a writer who has been one of the two or three most influential American critics during the past thirty years. Trilling refers at one point to Nietzsche's injunction that we "look below the sur-

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face of rational formulation to discover the *will* that is hidden beneath, and expressed through, its elaborations." If we make this effort in regard to Trilling himself, two observations come to mind.

First, his deepest interest in literature is not the critical act narrowly conceived, the description or analysis of a work and a judgment of its merits—though he has often performed this act with great force and delicacy. His deepest interest is in searching for the animating biases, the all-but-unspoken modulations of sentiment and value which give shape to a moment in cultural history. In an earlier time he might have been called a philosopher or historian of "moral consciousness," when that term did not carry the aura of faint depreciation it now does and when "moral" would have been assumed to include a range of experiences for which we have since found other names.

Perhaps my description of Trilling's central concerns may be clarified if I mention the school of critics who take a no-nonsense delight in ascribing recurrent turns of action and qualities of feeling in literary works to the shaping presence of "conventions." It is a "convention" that heroes behave as they do in epics, that sonnets often deal with romantic love, that Gothic novels are set in haunted castles. But to say this, while useful, is only a beginning. For the "convention" is a patterned, sometimes calcified record of historical turmoil and cultural innovation; the conduct of romantic heroes in 19th-century writing often follows a convention set in Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther,* but for that fixing of premise and style to be possible there had first or concurrently to take place a revolution in sensibility. Now, what fascinates Trilling and comprises, I think, the main burden of his work as critic, is the way a major work of art "comes out of" (I use quotation marks because we do not really know how that happens) the seedbed of a culture and then how the major work helps to define the very terms of the influence exerted upon it. How or why does a given moment of historical consciousness find it so hard to yield to the attractions of physical pleasure? How or why does another moment turn away from the quest for transcendence and accept the small change, if small change it be, of quotidian contentment?

In his role as historian of moral consciousness Trilling is far from systematic. He relies very heavily on the premise, shared with F.R. Leavis, that the major text is a decisive instance, and his work is steadily open to the criticism of compacting the history of "consciousness" into a realm too self-contained and insufficiently complicated by mere events. But he has chosen, all the same, a concern far more difficult than most of our other critics even approach, and it is the ground of his distinction.

Second, we can see in *Sincerity and Authenticity* the guiding norm, the goal, the working of *will,* to recur to Nietzsche's phrase, that inspires Trilling's work. It is a sense of life which makes Freud deeply congenial to him, and many recent cultural prophets uncongenial. Freud's "imagination of the human condition preserves something—much—of the stratum of hardness that runs through the Jewish and Christian traditions as they respond to the hardness of human destiny. Like the Book of Job it propounds and accepts the mystery and the naturalness—the natural mystery, the mysterious naturalness—of suffering." In advancing this austere vision Freud "had the intention of sustaining the authenticity of human existence that formerly had been ratified by God." Nietzsche too had wished for some such sustenance, as he "dreaded the 'weightlessness of all things,' the inauthenticity of experience, which he foresaw would be the consequence of the death of God." It is a wonderful if all-but unglossable phrase, that "weightlessness of things" dreaded by Nietzsche quite as if he had foreseen California. And as Trilling invokes it in behalf of his own sense of authenticity, he gains one's assent—yes, we know what he is trying to suggest here, we share his underlying uneasiness and urge to historical salvage. Until another question comes to mind: is not the very category of authenticity too coarsened in tone, too abrasive and lacerating in its effects, too inextricably associated with impulses toward dismissal and contempt? Might there not be some point in easing that self-assault, at one time liberating and later a mere complacent mimicry, which has been one of the less happy directives of modern culture? If *Emma Bovary, c'est moi,* and if she merits the compassion, even the sliver of respect, that Trilling would give her, might there not be some benefit in a similar indulgence for the rest of us? In short, would there not be some value in human beings, especially those who pride themselves on their cultivation, to learn to like themselves a little, just a little, once again—and authenticity be damned?

Another word: I have been reading Lionel Trilling's essays for many years with an acute sense of the distance between his way of thinking and my own. I have found it hard to adjust my ear to his elaborate style; wondered about his practice of personifying elements of consciousness into such alien wraiths as Spirit and Will; and felt uneasy about the conservative inclinations that creep into his liberal persuasions. It is hard, of course, to learn to value a writer for his precious difference, the animating evidence he offers of another mind at work. Reading this latest book of Lionel Trilling, I find that none of these difficulties has left me, but that they seem to transform themselves, shall we say, into authentic signs of personality and distinction. For what this book offers is the best of pleasures, the pleasures of mind.

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Modern Jews and Their History

Ben Halpern

All kinds of people have complained about history, and probably none more justifiably than the Jews. It has been said that a happy people is one without history; but what happens when happiness is offered to an unhappy people at the *price* of its history? The ensuing panic and confusion are major themes of Jewish history since the Emancipation, whose "social background" is the subject of a new book, *Out of the Ghetto*, by the Hebrew University sociologist and historian, Jacob Katz.*

One of the most damaging blows to the Jews' self-image since they came out of the ghetto was precisely the gibe that, in current history, Jews *had* no real meaning: they were irrelevant. Such a view of the Jews, a commonplace of Christian civilization beginning at least with Paul's dismissal of the Old Law, was picked up by post-Christian ideologues from Voltaire to Toynbee, who merely peddled the old goods in new wrappers. What was new, what remains new, is Jewish sensitivity to this charge of irrelevancy.

The classic pre-modern Jewish attitude took special pride in the generally accepted fact that Jews were not subject to the stars of history like ordinary peoples; for Jews lived out of time, in eternity, under the direct providence of the Almighty. If God's tender care for them during the long Exile consisted in imposing a succession of penances that made them, in the coinage of suffering, the most history-laden of peoples, this too was only another sign of their election.

So long as Jews lived by the pious conception of *galut*, accepting Exile, they drew strength and conviction, not panic and confusion, from their equivocal relation to history. Like all others who live in the world but are not of the world, they were powerless as well as long-suffering. In the timestream of history they were a small vacuum, a tiny sinkhole that absorbed all the shocks of the main current but no longer gave it independent impulsion. Yet in the eyes of traditional Jews it was the turbulence of the Gentiles, and not their own devoted Jewish quietism, that seemed profoundly irrelevant.

What makes a modern Jew is his awakening to the horror of the historical vacuum; or, to put it another way, his infection with the sense of it. All modern Jewish history is a spasm of phobic contortions to escape from the vacuum. Whether through assimilation or through Zionism, the Jewish modernist seeks freedom, or liberation, by regaining the main current of history. Differences over *how* this should be done, rather than over whether it should be done, divide the several schools of modern Jewish policy. It is the mark of a rigidly defensive traditionalism—or of a self-consciously pious neo-Orthodoxy like Franz Rosenzweig's—to reject the whole project in principle.

This, under another aspect, is also the main underlying problem of modern Jewish historiography. Leopold Zunz, who sorrowfully conceded in the 19th century that Jewish history was dead, passionately defended the study of it as a humanistic discipline; and thereby he also justifed his Jewish identity. Heinrich Graetz, who had a sturdier sense of ethnic pride, wrote a Jewish history which was alive enough to be resented by German historians as an offense against Gentiles. Yet it, too, failed to meet basic objections raised against the claim of Jewish history to be a valid enterprise; and the core problem of modern Jewish historiography has been that of overcoming the deficiencies of Graetz.

One such deficiency, deplored by Salo Baron, is Graetz's "lachrymose conception" of Jewish history. But if Graetz's volumes are so largely a chronicle of Jewish suffering, the real problem is not that his account is untrue or unbalanced, but precisely that it is so importantly correct. The 19th-century German historical school overdid things by making the state the sole organ of authentic history, but they saw the main point: true history is the history men make in action; what they merely suffer is fundamentally someone else's history. The current cultivation of social history, eminently represented by Baron among Jewish scholars, has real historical relevance only if it concerns itself (as Jacob Katz does) with those social conditions that significantly affect the actions and decisions by which history is truly made.

It is no accident that events are only now finally laying to rest the persistent doubt as to whether Jewish history really exists, whether what parades under the name is any more than a parochial, filiopietistic, self-absorbed, and self-indulgent folklore. The emergence of the State of Israel, a nation undoubtedly capable of making its own history, and facing others as well with the inescapable consequences of it, has had, among its other effects, an extraordinary impact upon the field of Jewish history, which today is burgeoning and expanding at a rate that still remains to be appreciated; and the growth is not only in Israel, the main center, but in academies and research centers all over the world.

If Israel's rise has reinvigorated Jewish history, the substantial core of it still remains the long Exile and particularly the great "ghetto" of Ashkenazic Jewry. This mass of Jews, living between the Rhine and the Russian plain, not only was the major part of world Jewry that survived the Middle

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Ages; it was also the part most completely secluded from outside influence, the most alien to its Gentile environment, of any Jewish community in the annals of the Diaspora. Hence, when Ashkenazic Jews came out of the ghetto, in the long drawn-out Emancipation following the French Revolution, they exploded into European society with unexampled dynamism.

This part of Jewry not only produced, in a few swift generations, Heine and Marx, Einstein and Freud, Trotsky and the Rothschilds, and an unparalleled flood of writers, actors, artists, musicians, and Nobel-prize-winning scientists; it also originated all those internal shocks and revolutions that constitute modern Jewish history, from religious reform to Jewish secularism, nationalist and socialist. The climactic paroxysm of Ashkenazic Jewish history, the Holocaust and the creation of Israel, continues to reverberate, beyond current Jewish history, in the contemporary affairs and consciousness of the whole world. Those who lived longest detached from history, passively battered by it, thus made the dynamic of their own modern history relevant with a vengeance.

Yet, to import Ashkenazic Jewish history into general history means to introduce a perspective and a time-scheme jarringly discordant with those generally accepted. If Ashkenazic Jewry is the yardstick, the Jewish "Middle Ages" lasted until the French Revolution (and in Russia, until the Russian Revolution), and "modern times" began at least three centuries after the Renaissance. The Ashkenazim, in other words, came out of the ghetto bringing their alienation with them. Graetz set the historian Treitschke's teeth on edge by making villains out of traditional German heroes; he disturbed later Jewish scholars by using a periodization badly unrelated to the common era-demarcations of European historians.

A MAJOR trend in modern Jewish historiography has been to eliminate, or at least reduce, this disparity. Baron, for example, has called in Italian Jewry, especially Italian Hebrew poets, to redress the imbalance of the Ashkenazic perspective, by showing that Renaissance humanism, as well as the 18th-century Enlightenment, found an echo in the ghetto. Yitzhak Baer has discovered in the culture of the German ghetto a continuing responsiveness to contemporary Christian trends in the High Middle Ages. Gershom Scholem, pursuing an analytic theme of far-reaching significance, has demonstrated that, like Christianity, Judaism too had a mystical religiosity, not merely a normative law, and he has argued that the mystical antinomians in Jewish history followed the same dynamic progression as their Christian counterparts and contemporaries, from pietistic chiliasm to revolutionary rationalism. Scholem thus brings modern Jewish developments like religious reform and Jewish liberalism back to the same sources and periods as in Christian society, and implicitly patches up the detachment of the Jewish from the Gentile historical perspective. Finally, scholars at the Hebrew University have painstakingly searched the 17th and 18th centuries for harbingers of the changes previously thought to have been introduced only in the 19th century, as the "beginnings" of modern Jewish history.

Yet in spite of such efforts, modern Jewish historiography remains fixed on a radically different time-perspective from general history, and must continue so as long as it acknowledges the Ashkenazic ghetto as its substantial core. (An Israeli nationalist school of historiography, which focuses on the succession of statehood, Exile, and restoration in Jewish history, also sets the story of the Jews in a frame quite independent of European traditions, but this represents a hyper-modern trend like that which seeks to break the shackles of conventional historiography in order to give the non-Western cultures their due.) Jacob Katz, from this point of view, is a staunchly traditional Jewish historian, for all his life work has been concentrated on the ghetto experience, and the radical break with it that produces Jewish modernity, and the records of Ashkenazic Jewry have been the chief source of his studies.

THE constant theme of Katz's work has been the Jewish movement out of the secluded ghetto into a state of openness toward and accommodation with Gentile society. *Out of the Ghetto* is a succinctly comprehensive discussion of this subject, synthesizing the results of earlier particular studies. Katz begins with a brief account, for the period 1650-1750, of the inner "dissolution of traditional society" (the subject of his previous book, *Tradition and Crisis*) and the growing openness of Jews and Gentiles toward one another (from his *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*). He then systematically explores the following topics: the social acceptance of some individual Jews in the Enlightenment and the expectations for Jewry as a whole by which this acceptance was justified; the backlash against Jewish integration from about 1780 to 1820; and the climate of Jewish opinion from 1780 to 1870—the "defecting fringe" of converts, the embattled religious reformers, and the "conservatives in a quandary." To these Katz adds a useful synopsis of the successive phases of legal emancipation and an especially valuable summary of the actual economic and social consequences of the legal-cultural breakthrough. From his balance sheet it emerges, again and again, that integration was only partially successful; that Jews had entered the current of history only to be shunted into its eddies, and that in coming out of the ghetto, the Jews did not solve but only began to face the problem of how to be modern while Jewish.

If Katz is a traditional Jewish historian in his concentration on the ghetto experience, he is at the same time one of very few historians who have gone beyond merely talking about historical sociology, or occasionally experimenting with it; he has been a consistent practitioner of this rare discipline

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all his life, a legitimate follower of Max Weber. This is a somewhat different enterprise from what is usually presented as social history, and it raises different problems in regard to Jewish history.

To write social history means little more than to concentrate on other than political events; but this often means diverting attention from those actions and decisions by which characteristically men seek to shape the future. Historical sociology, as practiced by Katz, similarly transcends the narrow concentration on politics of the old-style histories and covers systematically all the areas of social change—cultural values, forms of association, economic relations, as well as political trends. There is even, as in social history in general, a deliberate concentration on the other areas, as though political developments were assumed to be familiar. But unlike most descriptive social historians, Katz chooses his topics under a clear principle of selection. His study of the ghetto analyzes its cultural, social, and economic structures at the moment of breakdown and crisis, when the community faces a problematic future and must choose among alternative new policies. What he studies is "the social background of Jewish Emancipation": that is, not social structure in general, but the changing "infrastructure" bearing on historic policy decisions.

If one deals with problematic futures, with breakdown and crisis, and the need to choose among alternative policies, the appropriate literary form is likely to be the essay rather than the narrative style of political history or the survey of social history. Katz has, indeed, written frequently in the essay, or monograph, form. But the inhibitions of an academic conscience have also had a powerful disciplining effect upon his writing. Accordingly, he has kept within the defined limits of his initial subject, begun in his doctoral dissertation on the social background of the Jewish Emancipation and now recapitulated in this book on the same subject over thirty years later. In the interim, Jewish scholarship has filled in numerous gaps and argued out controversial issues related to Katz's theme. He himself has clarified major aspects of the subject, like the history of Freemasonry as a model of a potential "neutral society" which might serve to bring Jews out of the ghetto into the mainstream of European history. The present volume judiciously sums up a generation of his own work and that of his contemporaries and can probably stand as a balanced, accurate conclusion.

IMPLICIT in the topics chosen by Katz, and indeed suggested by the historical-sociological approach he adopts, are certain largely unanswered questions. *Could* Jews have entered fully and unreservedly into the general history of Christian nations? Could they, other than by Zionist methods, have pursued their own history again, actively and independently? Of what avail was religious reform and Jewish liberalism? How "neutral" was the secular or, for that matter, the "Judeo-Christian" Western society?

Katz alludes to these issues in passing: his answers, although sometimes explicit, are more often implied. To deal with them frontally he would have to apply his Weberian approach more fully and more rigorously than he has done. As he explains in this book, he has confined himself to a generalizing summary of the least-common-denominator features of his subject; and most of the illustrative data, accordingly, come from the Ashkenazic ghetto and the German-Jewish enlightened elite.

To answer the more suggestive questions his approach projects, he would have to enter into comparative analyses, and study not merely representative but deviant cases: emancipated France and England, where religious reform did not produce Jewish denominationalism; the United States, where no Jewish emancipation really occurred but religious reform and denominationalism were most in evidence; and, above all, the oddly negative involvement of Sephardic Jewries, on the eastern and western Atlantic shores, in crucial aspects of Jewish modernity. These, together with the historic revival of Jewish ethnic consciousness, are some of the new issues a younger group of historians, stimulated by the example no less than by the results of Katz and his generation, are now beginning to explore.

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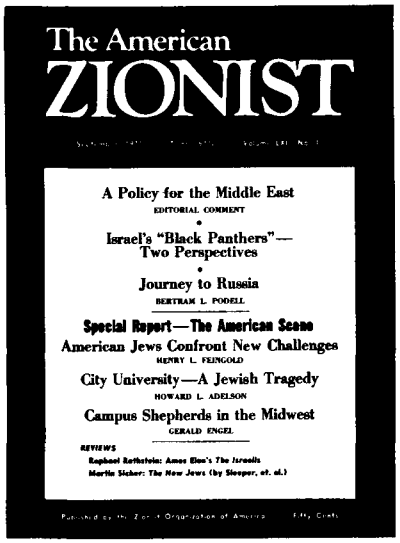

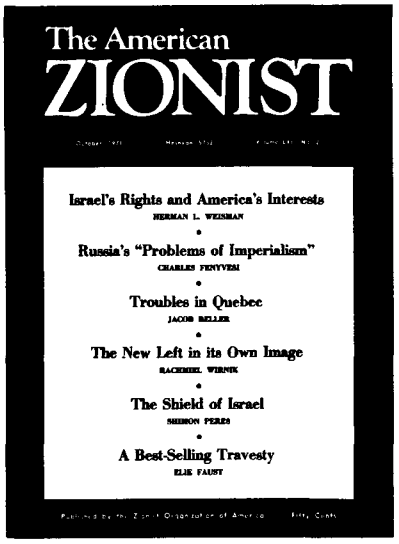

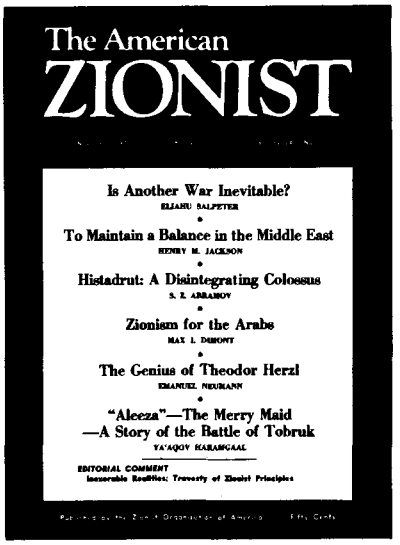

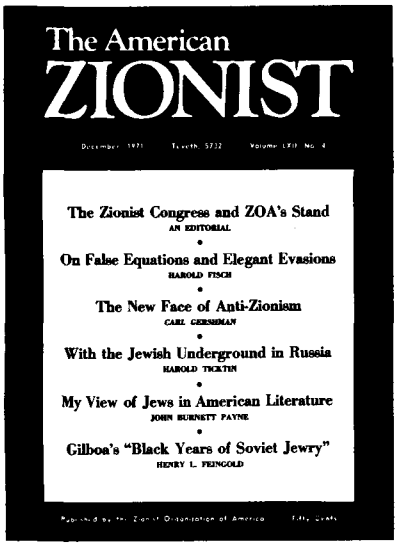

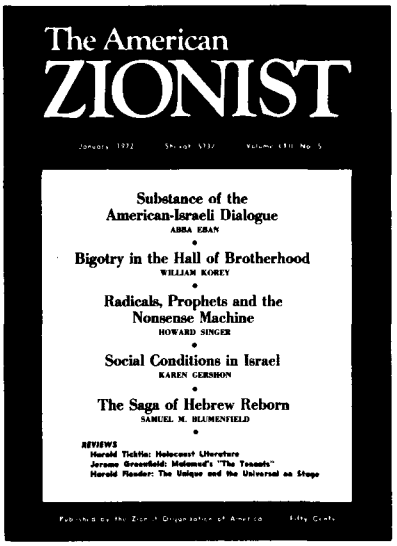

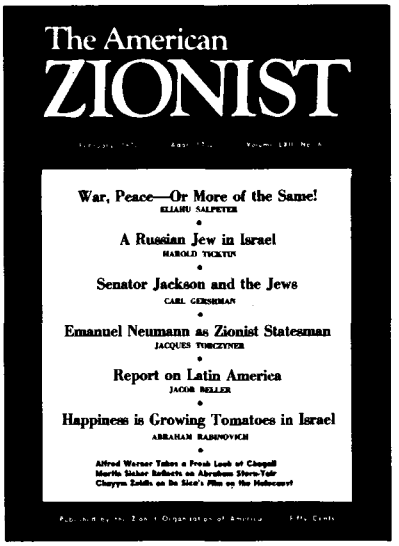

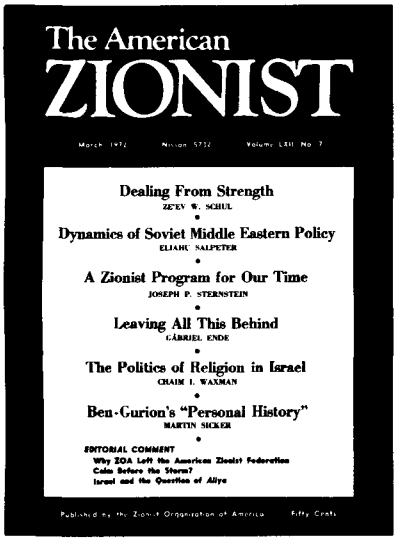

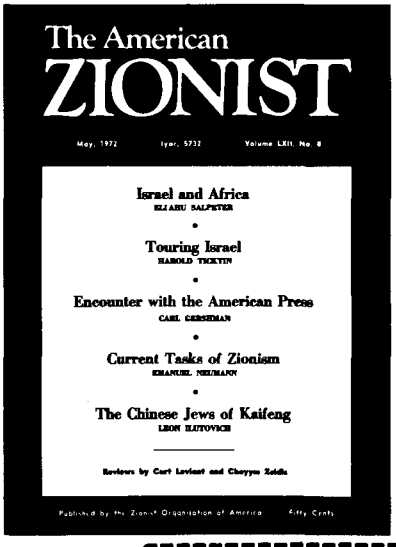

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Books in Review

The Intrepid Scholar

NEWS FROM NOWHERE: TELEVISION AND THE NEWS. By EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN. *Random House. 321 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by DAVID ERNEST HAIGHT

THE public image of American journalism has always included a good proportion of myth. Well before the Second World War, Broadway and Hollywood had made the stereotype of the Intrepid Reporter—dogged in his pursuit of the truth, fearless in his determination to see it printed—nearly as familiar as the white hats that identified the good guys in a Western. The war made legends out of such foreign correspondents as Ernie Pyle and Margaret Bourke-White; in the cold-war years that followed, with their prolonged emphasis on foreign affairs, the image of the newspaper correspondent came to be fixed in a new stereotype, but one every bit as solid, and as favorable, as the old one of Hollyood.

Television was at first merely an instrument of this myth, but in the mid-1950's it grew to be something more. With the development of national network news programs, the legend came to life. Combining the events of the day with the actual faces and voices of individual correspondents, television brought forth the Intrepid Reporter before our eyes, and in the process created a new kind of journalism. Today TV news is an American institution, and in Edward Jay Epstein's latest book it has now received a serious study of its operation. In *News from Nowhere* Epstein examines the processes by which network news programs are created and the institutional factors which shape those processes. His discoveries are thoroughly deflating to the myth of the Intrepid Reporter.

DAVID ERNEST HAIGHT *teaches political science at Hunter.*

Epstein's two previous books were on headline-making topics (the first was *Inquest*, the most sensible of the critiques of the Warren Commission; the second dealt with New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison and his purported discovery of the plotters of President Kennedy's assassination) and consequently he has sometimes been considered a journalist himself. Not here. *News from Nowhere*, which began as a doctoral dissertation at Harvard, is a first-rate example of most of the qualities which make scholarship more than journalism.

TO BEGIN with, the book is based on extraordinarily thorough research. Epstein spent four months of 1968-69 in daily observation of the NBC Evening News, then two more months at ABC and CBS conducting interviews and searching for differences from NBC. He held formal interviews with 93 correspondents, technicians, producers, news editors, and news-division executives, and more than a hundred less formal discussions with such other sources as FCC officials, managers of affiliate stations, and executives and specialists at the parent networks. He studied Congressional committee reports, FCC documents, and the memoranda, logs, and scripts of the early evening news programs at each network.

The distinction between scholarship and journalism is made clear in what Epstein does with all this material. His analysis does not deal with the ephemeral aspects of his subject, the changes in personnel and passing issues which constitute so much of the news-reporting system itself. His major conclusion is that "the pictures of society which are shown on television as national news are largely—though not entirely—formed and shaped by organizational considerations." That is to say, the organizational requirements of national networks place such restrictions on the work of their news divisions that the correspondents themselves exercise only a minor influence on their own broadcasts. He describes four such restrictions, and in one way or another each is a blow to the legend of the Intrepid Reporter.

First is budgetary restriction. News divisions are often described as "autonomous," but in fact the revenues from advertising on news programs are collected by the parent network, which then allots a budget to the news operation. The policy of all three networks, according to Epstein, is that national news should be given little more than enough funds to fill the necessary airtime. The rationale behind this policy—much less flattering to reporters than mere corporate tightfistedness—is the conviction that the public simply is not interested in news. Analyses of the composition and behavior of TV audiences have convinced the networks that, as Epstein puts it, "network news programs, unlike entertainment or local news programs, inherit most of their audience from the preceding programs. In other words, national news does not attract its own audience to any significant extent."

THE implications of this are far-reaching. If network news programs do not draw their own audience, then no changes in the quality of those programs—in coverage, reporting, or investigative journalism—are likely to increase the audience or the revenues based upon it. Networks therefore have little incentive to provide more than the minimum coverage demanded by their affiliate stations (which in turn are responding primarily to the FCC's demand for a certain percentage of "public-service" programming). This leads to a variety of cost-cutting techniques designed to produce the impression of national news coverage at minimum expense. One is the practice of taking many out-of-town (i.e., out-of-New York) stories from certain cities like Chicago and Washington which are connected to network headquarters by permanently-

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leased cables, for the transmission of material from these points is free to the news division. Another is the use of many "timeless" stories from areas like Europe or the West Coast which are not permanently connected, since these can be filmed at leisure and flown to New York at much lower cost than leasing cables or satellites Yet another is the restriction of filmed coverage of timely events to those predictable ones which are almost certain to produce "usable" stories.

The concept of usable stories is based on the second organizational requirement: maintaining the inherited audience. Network analysts believe that "unsatisfactory" presentation of the news can actually lose viewers, thus reducing the inherited audience for prime-time entertainment programs. Satisfactory presentation involves 1) clear-cut, highly "visual" images; 2) motion; and 3) conflict, preferably with two easily-described sides. Epstein quotes a memorandum from the president of NBC News: "Every news story should, without any sacrifice of probity or responsibility, display the attributes of fiction, of drama. It should have structure and conflict, problem and denouement, rising action and falling action, a beginning, a middle, and an end. These are not only the essentials of drama; they are the essentials of narrative." The implementation of such policies is the responsibility of producers, whose role in TV journalism is roughly that of editors in print media. Epstein maintains that correspondents who do not fit their reports to the formulas of drama may find themselves on a producer's blacklist, receiving few assignments.

Other restrictions are imposed by the networks' relations with their affiliates and with the FCC. Affiliate stations, which can refuse network programs if they wish, see no point in replacing local programs with less profitable network material unless the network is providing something the affiliate needs and cannot provide itself. The FCC ruling that news programs count toward its requirement for public-service programming creates a need, but the only material affiliates cannot provide themselves is *national* news, which they therefore

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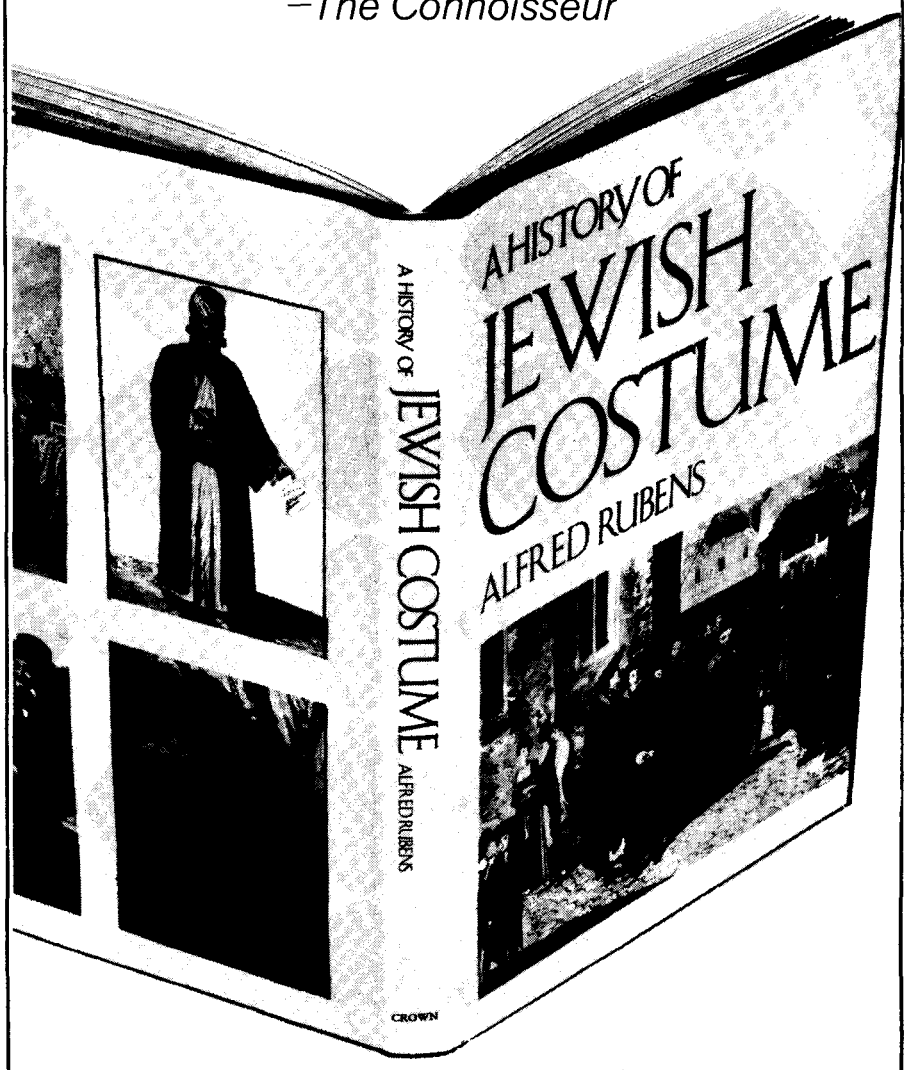

Never before has the development of Jewish attire and adornment been so thoroughly and fascinatingly explored as in Alfred Rubens' magnificent book, A HISTORY OF JEWISH COSTUME. The myriad variations of style resulting from geographical separation, passage of time, and discriminatory laws are clearly presented in text as well as a great many superb illustrations — nearly half in full color. "A learned and far-reaching study . . . and all those who are interested not only in Jewish costume as such but in costume in general are deeply in [Mr. Rubens'] debt."—from the foreword by James Laver. Lavishly illustrated with 275 paintings, drawings and photographs in full color and black and white. 9½" x 12¾".

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demand from the network. "To meet this expectation," Epstein says, "producers must solve the problem of converting local happenings—since all news happens in *some* locality—into national stories. The 'nationalization of news,' which is commonly regarded by network producers as the crux of their operation, is accomplished by using reports about particular events as illustrations of national themes." The choice of these themes is obviously based on individual judgment, but even here their presentation, like that of all stories, is subject to the fourth restriction: the Fairness Doctrine of the FCC.

The FCC has traditionally been reluctant even to appear to be censoring broadcasters' views. One result is that its celebrated Doctrine is utterly unconcerned with content; it merely demands equal coverage of each side of controversial topics. As interpreted by the networks, this means programs in which equally articulate representatives receive equal amounts of time—regardless of whether such a presentation is actually "representative" in any statistical or ideological sense—and policies which discourage correspondents from taking partisan positions and from investigations which might conclude that one partisan position is clearly right.

IN summary, *News from Nowhere* portrays television journalism as virtually compelled to present a distorted picture of America, to manufacture out of the raw material of daily events a view of society which is biased toward certain geographic areas, certain types of people and behavior, and certain types of (usually superficial) commentary—all in all, no setting for the Intrepid Reporter.

Epstein's arguments in support of his conclusions are almost completely persuasive, despite an occasional error of fact or judgment. (For one thing, he dismisses Edith Efron's criticism of 1968 election coverage in one-and-a-half pages which mainly suggest that he has only casually read her argument, and he repeatedly misspells her name; for another, the American Political Science Association does not, as Epstein says at one point, conduct public-opinion polls.) Yet his tightly woven pattern of evidence and interpretation and his ability to draw persuasive conclusions, the two greatest strengths of his book, may ironically leave some readers dissatisfied, for the author seems capable of more than he delivers. More than once Epstein's statements about network news seem to have important implications for society as a whole which he simply ignores. The "national themes" used to generalize local events are an example; Epstein never discusses the consequences of choosing one theme over another. Similarly, he disagrees with Vice President Agnew's explanation of the narrow geographic focus of network stories, arguing that such narrowness arises "because news is less expensive and more conveniently available from these cities, not because of the political preferences of any small fraternity of newsmen. . . .," but he does not consider whether the effect is not the same. In short, *News from Nowhere* restricts itself to an exploration of the subject indicated by its subtitle, "Television and the News," when it might have said important things about television and America.

Nevertheless, within its scope, this is an excellent book—one whose thoroughgoing analysis and unglamorous conclusions are sure to offend network correspondents and executives alike. In its dogged pursuit of accuracy and truth, *News from Nowhere* offers a particularly fine example of the virtues of Intrepid Scholarship.

From the West Bank

THE FACE OF DEFEAT. By DAVID PRYCE-JONES. *Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 179 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by JAMES R. ADAMS

To the detached observer, the search for truth in the Arab-Israeli conflict must seem a short road to madness. So many directly contradictory statements are maintained with such equally fervent conviction that the inquirer may finally conclude that the truth cannot be found at all, or indeed does not exist. What ultimately will be held to have happened in the Middle East, what may actually indeed have happened, will depend on which proves to be the stronger in the great clash of national wills. This, one might say, is the theme of David Pryce-Jones's short but remarkably deep and valuable book, *The Face of Defeat*. "The issue," he writes, "is not a matter for the record and may never be until it is as legendary as Moses's crossing of the Red Sea and the drowning of Pharaoh's chariots."

The Face of Defeat is by and large an account of a Grand Tour of the Palestinian problem, a tour undertaken in the years since the Six-Day War as a series of visits to the West Bank, UNRWA camps in Jordan and Lebanon, and the headquarters of the fedayeen organizations in Beirut. Mr. Pryce-Jones's guides were UNRWA officials, guerrilla spokesmen, Israeli military administrators—a group including many men whose way of life depended on a fixed conception of the situation of the other side. Any writer would have a problem absorbing and reconciling the material these sources had to offer, but Mr. Pryce-Jones has found a solution. A novelist by vocation, he has fashioned a book of vignettes and images in an evocative, allusive style which may owe something to T.E. Lawrence. Because of the book's "literary" quality, the reader may be lulled into overlooking the serious reporting it contains, but Mr. Pryce-Jones is thoroughly competent at presenting facts and opinions. His greatest success, however, is at the level of psychology, in catching the nuances, the hidden reservations, and the subtle pressures that underlie and often outweigh the content of many a stock formulation uttered by one or another of his interlocutors. Mr. Pryce-Jones pays a price for the effects he achieves—the book lacks a clear chronology of events and passes over or leaves out entirely a number of important developments—but on the whole it is

JAMES R. ADAMS *has spent time traveling in and writing about Jordan and the West Bank.*

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a price that the reader pays happily.

In his discussion of the fedayeen, one of the two main foci of the book, Mr. Pryce-Jones shows less concern with tracing the organization and ideology of the Palestinian guerrillas than with laying forth the panorama of their rise and fall. In the course of a single chapter he carries us from the guerrillas' over-hasty and abortive attempt to organize on the West Bank in late 1967, through the Battle of Karameh—the true beginning of the "guerrilla mystique"—on March 21, 1968, and on to their illusory heyday in Jordan; he captures admirably the wave of enthusiasm that swept up fedayeen, Jordanians, and foreign journalists alike, a state of mind which became a more powerful political fact than the guerrilla activity which purported to justify it.

When Mr. Pryce-Jones returns to the fedayeen in a later chapter and on a later visit, they had been ridden out of Jordan, abandoned by the press, and reduced to factional bickering and polemicizing. In common with many correspondents in the year or so after the Jordanian civil war of September 1970, he found them suspicious of foreigners, uncommunicative, hard to locate. Doing the Beirut rounds, the PLO office for the late Kemal Nasser, the PFLP paper *al-Hadaf* for the late Ghassen Khanafani, the rival Palestinian research institutes with their scores of American-trained intellectuals, Mr. Pryce-Jones was met this time not with enthusiasm and self-confidence but with ideological harangues and a retreat into comforting, half-digested theories of "social contradictions" and "people's war." Mr. Pryce-Jones concludes his account of the fedayeen on a bleak note, with the murder of Wasfi Tell, the Jordanian prime minister who drove out the guerrillas and who was in turn the first public victim of the Black September Organization. He thus leaves unwritten the subsequent story of Septembrist terror, which is actually the history of Fatah's collapse as a guerrilla-oriented organization.

THE real core of *The Face of Defeat*, however, is not the Palestinian guerrilla movement but Mr.

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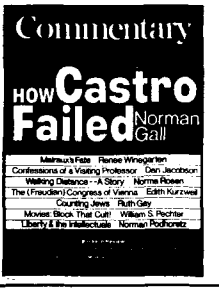

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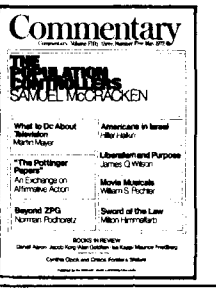

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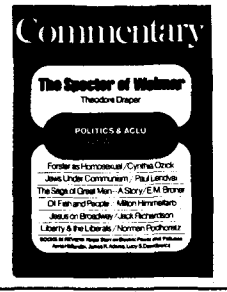

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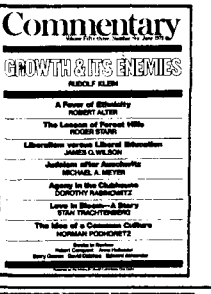

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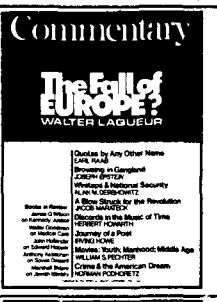

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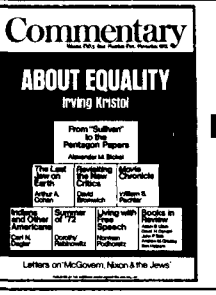

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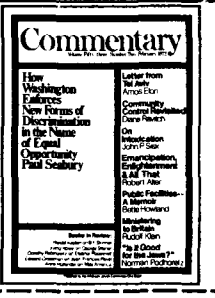

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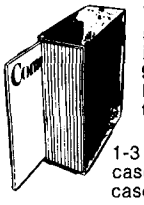

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Pryce-Jones's descriptions of Arab life on the West Bank, under the Israeli occupation. Here, on the West Bank, the propaganda illusions that sustain the refugees across the river or the fedayeen in Beirut have altogether collapsed. What remains is hard to define. There is a surface level of cooperation with the Israelis, arising from a very long history of submission to conquest. A second level of hatred, shame, resentment lies shortly underneath. And beneath that, a third level at which the strange and sudden meeting of half-known enemies must have its effect. Mr. Pryce-Jones attempts to fathom this third level:

> With no outlet, hatred is impotent, it dribbles away into self-hatred or else grows into a form of curiosity about the enemy who can arouse such feelings in us. And that in turn engenders self-pity and admiration, even love, for that enemy. . . .
>
> An outside inquirer becomes familiar with quite a rigid cultural pattern. West Bank activists will begin by denouncing the Jews and all their works: they will elaborate this into recriminations of the Arabs for being so abject, blaming themselves exaggeratedly for their own faults and showing up everybody's behavior in the worst light—after which you are a friend, you may drop in whenever you please and treat their house as yours. So it ceases to be a surprise that someone who is on public record as wanting the death of every Jew in fact spends weekends at a kibbutz; or that someone else who is proud of Fatah connections takes loans from the Israelis. . . .

Mr. Pryce-Jones seems to know everyone of importance between Hebron and Nablus, and his interviews bring out the ambivalent mood of the Arab leadership. But there are two additional chapters which he does not attempt to write. The first would follow West Bank opinion *below* the level of the English-speaking professional elite or traditional clan leadership—down, in fact, to the level of "the Unknown Arab," the fellahin who remain a puzzle to Mr. Pryce-Jones. The second might shed light on this puzzle by dealing with the great economic upheaval currently taking place on the West Bank. In this connection Mr. Pryce-Jones skips much too hastily over the figures of rising consumption and production given him by the Israeli military administration (they were perhaps not as dramatic at the time as they are now), and he dodges the question raised by the massive numbers of West Bank peasants and laborers, perhaps more than 50 per cent of the indigeneous work force, who commute daily across the "Green Line" for Israeli jobs at Israeli pay scales.

To many Israelis, the West Bank economic policy is a strategy aimed at producing an Arab working class that will speak in its own right. The main bar to Arab acceptance of Israel, in this view, is the age-old feudal structure of Arab society; by helping to create a self-conscious Arab working class the Israeli occupation will further the cause of reconciliation between Arabs and Jews. This thesis, which owes much to Israel's socialist perspective, is directly contradicted by experience with "progressive" Arab regimes like Syria and Egypt, which are in fact far more militant than the old feudal monarchies. But of course the case can be made that these countries have never really abandoned their traditional social structure; as one Arabist has put it, "the Arab socialist regimes are the only countries in the world which have passed from feudalism to socialism with no intervening social change." Only in the "Administered Territories" of Judea and Samaria, where if you scratch an Israeli soldier you will find a social worker, has there been a chance to test this hypothesis (or blind assumption). It is in fact arguable that the only true social revolution in the entire Arab world is now taking place on the West Bank, under the aegis of Israel.

This argument has indeed been made (for the latest version, see the article by B. Shaicovitch in the April *New Middle East*, under the title, "Dialectical Paternalism"). But how true is it? *Is* a change in social outlook occurring among the people directly exposed to Israeli society, the Arab workers? Mr. Pryce-Jones warns, "Almost everybody finds on the West Bank whatever he came to find," and this is a

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necessary caution in looking for evidence of social evolution. But some local Arab commentators themselves say that change is taking place. Mohammed Abu Shilbaya, the remarkably independent East Jerusalem columnist, even welcomes those aspects of the Israeli occupation that have taught his people democratic manners and scientific thinking. For all the difficulties of the occupation, and despite the fact that he interprets Israel's economic policy as a form of colonialism, he believes that the workers are learning self-confidence, women are improving their status, and the feudal class is on its way out.

The West Bank working class (often synonymous with the refugee-camp population) has picked up one popular Israeli activity, the strike. The largest factory on the West Bank, the Jordan Vegetable Oils Industries Company Ltd., raised its wages last summer after day-laborers from the Balata refugee camp across the road walked out for three days. The plant owners, the wealthy al-Masri clan, had been able to cope with labor unrest before the occupation by calling in the Jordanian police. This time, the Israeli administration conspicuously refused to intervene, even though an al-Masri is now the mayor of Nablus.

At the same time, however, the workers show no readily visible gratitude to Israel for their prosperity and their new-found independence of the traditional clans. Sympathy for the guerrillas (as opposed to active support) lies fairly close to the surface. According to some non-Arab West Bank residents, workers applauded last September's massacre at the Munich Olympics with as much excitement as the radical-chic professional classes. This April, the Arab population openly mourned the death of three guerrilla leaders in Beirut at Israeli hands.

IN THE end, one is left with statistics and a few anecdotes hinting at the beginnings of a social realignment. But the question remains whether such a change is really in motion, and if so, whether it will produce the results for which the Israeli administration seems to

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hope. A recession in Israel, a political decision to cut back on Arab labor, even a negotiated withdrawal that closed the border once again, could end the prosperity and leave West Bank society where it was, only more embittered. On the other hand, if the feudal structure does indeed collapse, might not a political and social chaos ensue, with unforeseeable consequences? Is the traditional leadership really any less able to make peace than whatever might replace it? Or is all this talk entirely premature, and will family and religious traditions prove stronger than economics?

These questions will most likely remain unanswerable for a long time to come. Meanwhile, Mr. Pryce-Jones's book provides what are perhaps the only appropriate reactions to the occupation: wonder at the spectacle of it all, and hope that something better than the past will emerge from this interaction of former enemies.

McCarthy as Buccaneer

WHEN EVEN ANGELS WEPT: A STORY WITHOUT A HERO. By LATELY THOMAS. *Morrow. 654 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by LOUIS BERG

FOR a book that bases itself on a false premise, Lately Thomas's account of the rise and fall of the late Senator Joseph Raymond McCarthy stands up fairly well, is reasonably solid in its facts, and warranted in most of its assumptions. The premise, which can and does lead to dangerous conclusions, is that inasmuch as McCarthy was a swashbuckling freebooter in politics, he should be immune from moral condemnation. "One does not, one cannot, pass moral judgments upon pirates . . . the pirate is not amenable to moral laws because he recognizes none."

The truth is, we may judge McCarthy on moral grounds and perhaps *only* on moral grounds. He came into national and even worldwide prominence through his one-man crusade against Communist infiltration into high government circles. It was admitted even by those who shared this purpose that he pursued it to an extreme. Now, it is in the nature of the holiest of crusades—like the holiest of wars—to be indiscriminately ruthless, but what distinguished McCarthy from other Torquemadas in history, what made him singularly reprehensible, was not his fanaticism but his lack of it, the absence in him of any moral or even political purpose. He desired, quite simply, self-aggrandizement, and any cause that would have furthered this end would have suited him as well as anti-Communism. To advance himself, moreover, he was as willing to sacrifice friend as foe, political ally as political opponent. He forced not only Owen Lattimore, John Stewart Service, Edmund Clubb, and others whose loyalties, rightly or wrongly, were being questioned, to walk the plank, but also such Establishment stalwarts as Millard Tydings, John Foster Dulles, Walter Bedell Smith, Margaret Chase Smith, and even that hard-core Tory, Robert T. Stevens, then Secretary of the Army, who as a private industrialist could not stomach Green or Meany of the non-radical AFL any more than Walter Reuther of the militant CIO—radicals all.

MCCARTHY himself was without loyalty of any kind, to party or to principles. It is not altogether true, as some have recently claimed, that he uncovered no Communists on his own; hard-pressed, he did pull a few out of his hat. But rather than naming names, he preferred to wave papers, flourish documentary evidence that he would allow no man to read, and quote figures for which he offered no substantiation —they may even have been accurate, for all anyone may ever know. How much these wild tactics helped the cause he professed to serve is a moot question. Undoubtedly McCarthy helped to dramatize a dangerous infiltration of Communists into high government circles. On the other hand, he spread disarray in his own camp as well as in the camp of the enemy and made it all too easy to raise the cry of McCarthyism whenever exposure of the secret and subversive activities of the lackeys of the Soviet Union (if I may paraphrase) was threatened; and in this regard he was of service to the Communists in this country and their sympathizers. If there had been no McCarthy the Communists would have created him.

It is supreme irony, and poetic justice, that it was his own party, to which he was an embarrassment, and its conservative wing, moreover, that put the quietus on his meteoric career, and it was a cry of outraged morality—"Sir, have you no shame!"—real or assumed, from Joseph Welch, attorney for the U.S. Army, that supplied the finishing touch. The liberals might howl, inside and outside of the Senate, but they were impotent. Particularly ineffective in the fight against McCarthy were those who might be called the "one-eyed liberals," who could see injustice only through the left eye, who were keenly aware of the evils of the system under which they lived and even flourished but were blind to the sweeping inhumanities of the Soviet system. In the name of the Four Freedoms, they knowingly espoused causes, joined organizations, signed manifestoes, all sponsored by the enemies of those freedoms, and cried "guilt by association" when the fact of their involvement was pointed out. They were also the first to flee before the McCarthy reign of terror. Their panic, in fact, led them to excesses of their own, as when victims of the Hollywood and television blacklisting of suspected Communists were fired by the very people who had hired them in full knowledge of their Communist association or lack of it.

Be that as it may, the task of defeating McCarthy was left in the end to the outraged legislators of the Right. He had become too shifty even for politicians, too blatant a cheat to be allowed in the gentleman's club, too treacherous to be accepted as an ally, too dishonest to be loved, too crude to be engaging, much as he sought to appear friendly and even charm-

LOUIS BERG, *whose work has appeared in a variety of journals, reviewed Margaret Truman's biography of her father in March.*

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ing. The first open move in the Senate to subdue him, led by Margaret Chase Smith, a conservative Republican, was significantly called "A Declaration of Conscience." Though the wish to ostracize McCarthy long preceded the deed, once he was put down he stayed subdued. It had been bullheaded stupidity, not audacity, that led him to take potshots at President Eisenhower and the revered General Marshall: the impudence of a naughty child testing to see how much he could get away with. Finally papa, too long enduring, spanked and that was the end of it.

ALL this, to be sure, took place on a grandiose scale, against a background of momentous world events, and, as Thomas points out, "before a rapt audience of millions." However, the size of the stage, and the audience, even the huge billing, should not be allowed to ennoble a cheap performance. Thomas's almost juvenile obsession with the notion of McCarthy as a bold buccaneer sets the story in false perspective, or rather offers none at all. Too much time is spent on courtroom drama—McCarthy versus his accusers in the Senate—much of which was, as in a real court-of-law, mere tiresome squabbling.

The real drama was outside of the courtroom, in McCarthy's impact on the nation at large, and in particular on its liberal and progressive elements. In Thomas's account the figure of the man is made to loom too large, against too limited a background, as if we were viewing a detail, highly magnified, belonging to a huger canvas. This is useful, certainly, but restricting. Worse, the lens through which it is viewed is distorted. The book jacket proclaims "an objective appraisal," while the author in his foreword disclaims *any* appraisal, political or moral, but in fact he cannot resist an occasional hurrah for his non-hero, or a jibe or two at McCarthy's opponents. Still, *When Even Angels Wept* is worth reading; it is carefully researched and contains much useful information. But it still falls short of being the definitive work on its subject.

Religion and Modern Man

UNSECULAR MAN: THE PERSISTENCE OF RELIGION. By ANDREW M. GREELEY. *Schocken Books. 280 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by ALAN L. MINTZ

IN HIS most recent book Andrew M. Greeley takes on the ghost of positivism and tries once and for all to lay it to rest. Greeley argues that it is the deepest conviction of the "conventional wisdom"—a term which by turns seems to stand for the thought of social theorists, radical theologians, and intellectuals in general—that social change is evolutionary by nature and that consciousness necessarily proceeds away from religion toward abstract thought and technology. In a world "come of age" man is weaned away from dependence on myths and acquires the capacity to live without the sacred and the primordial. The mysteries before which he once yielded are those he now possesses the tools to lay open and, with a glance toward the year 2000, solve. In his social relations "secular man" is adept at what theorists call *gesellschaft* relationships, casual and contractual ties which, in their avoidance of deep loyalties (*gemeinschaft*), engage only one or a few aspects of man's total social being. Able easily to sink roots, he moves from place to place and from group to group with little sense of loss or dislocation. Secular, temporary man, although not yet prevalent everywhere, is nevertheless the emergent type toward which society, in its irreversible and one-directional movement, is at present tending. Consequently, traces of religious belief and practice that remain can only be viewed as vestigial and retrograde.

This, Greeley claims, is the model that classical sociology has put forth: religion is on the decline and secular technological man on the rise. Greeley, relying heavily on the work of Robert Nisbet, goes to great lengths to refute this notion. To begin with, the doctrine

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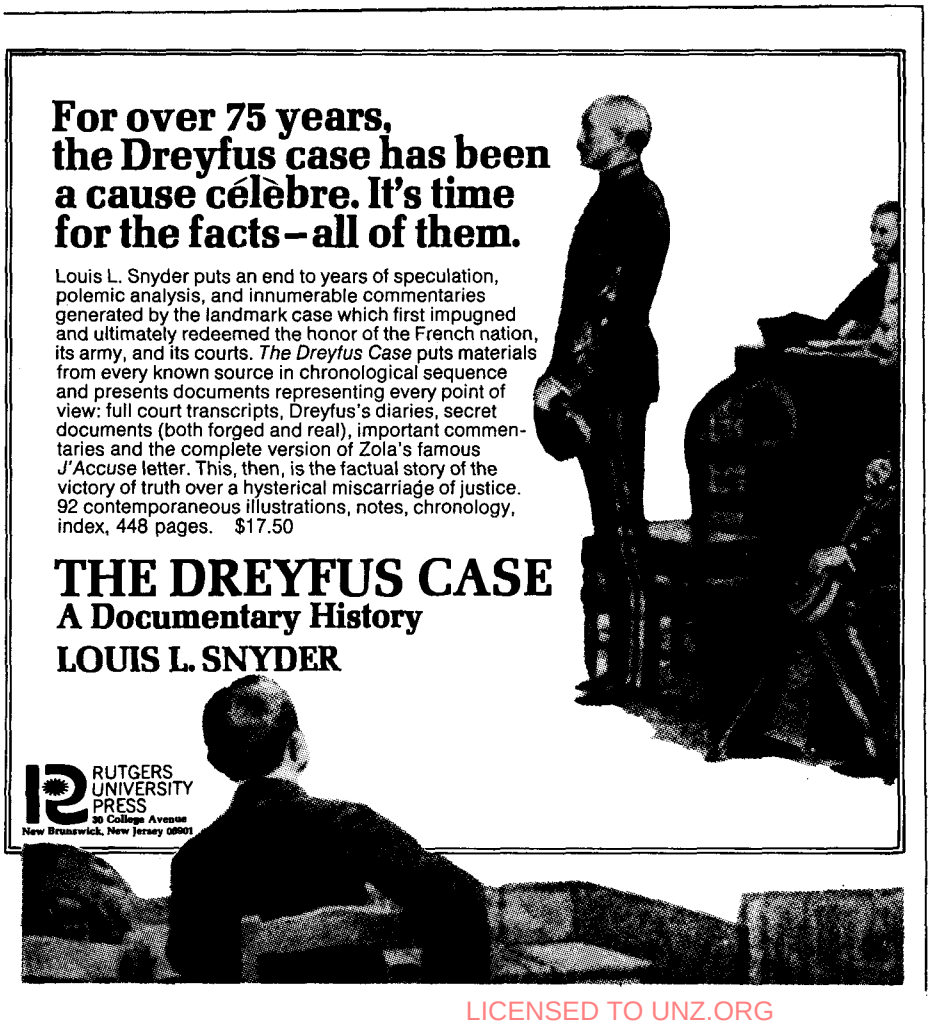
of organic evolution is based on a metaphor from biology for which there is no substantive evidence in human affairs and no possible application to abstract universals such as social systems. Ideas about the rise, maturation, and decline of religions involve an assumption of continuous and one-directional change which is usually a fiction imposed by the observer who has a stake in seeing things move in a particular direction. Regarding social relations, Greeley persuasively maintains that the historical relationship between *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* values is one of addition rather than replacement. Not only do the primary ties of friendship, land, faith, and common origin persist undiminished, but, on occasion, they are even strengthened. Modern marriage, for example, combines for the first time in the same relationship the once disparate claims of friendship, sex, and love. Fragmentary, purposive, and casual relationships have, of course, vastly proliferated in modern life, but they have formed only a "corporate" structure which rests on an enduring base of primordial relations.

And finally, there are the data: as a director of the National Opinion Research Center in Chicago, Greeley has at his disposal a prodigious number of tables and charts. In *Secular Man* and in an earlier volume, *What Do We Believe?*, he demonstrates that in the past twenty years there have been very few changes in the high degree of group affiliation and religious belief among Americans. Where most of us would expect to find significant decline Greeley shows us evidence of even more astonishing continuity. Why is this so? To explain, Greeley posits a universal and unchanging need for "meaning systems" which provide "an ultimate explanation" of the world, a need which penetrates and transcends man's rationalism and self-sufficiency precisely at critical moments: the sense of bafflement about the nature of things, the need to integrate "the troubling forces of sexuality" into the rest of man's life, the crises in the stages of the life cycle, the experience of moral outrage that goes beyond the self. No matter how far a man lives his life outside of traditional religious categories, such experiences force him to ask questions which are in fact essentially religious and prompt him to use myth in attempting to formulate and answer them.

The case is appealing, and one appreciates the clarity with which Greeley's mind cuts through the rhetoric that has been churned out about the "inexorable unfolding of modern man." But in looking closely at Greeley's thesis one discovers that his presentation succeeds only by allowing several critical qualifications. For example, he excludes from his generalizations persons who occupy important positions in government, in the media, in university faculties, and in the larger corporate businesses, for among such groups, apparently, secularity has made significant inroads. Even though this does not, of course, include the great mass of Americans, one would be hard pressed not to grant this group a significance beyond its absolute numbers. To pretend to chart the state of belief while disregarding the creators of the culture in which belief must exist only reinforces a mistaken notion about the utter separation of a society from its intellectuals.

Another freedom Greeley allows himself is to be exceedingly broad in defining religion, a habit he shares with most other sociologists of religion. This is not the quibble it might seem, for to define religion as a "meaning system which offers an ultimate explanation of the world" is, in a telling way, to allow a great deal. Greeley is thus able to hedge on the crucial difference between religions as we have known them and social movements which merely evince and gratify religious needs, a confusion which often undercuts the otherwise strong arguments of the book. What is one to say, for example, about socialism, liberalism, evolutionism, Zionism, and the other secular ideologies of the 19th century? Surely they were systems of meaning which, except for the customary replacement of the di-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vine referent by terms like Humanity and Society, came replete with their own dogma, liturgy, and eschatology, and undoubtedly went very far in satisfying the demand for an "ultimate explanation of the world." The history of the 19th century, viewed in this way, is the history of "conversions" *out of* traditional religions into the new ideologies of the age—the initiates usually pausing very little to alter the forms of their enthusiasm and doctrinal fervor. But were these in actuality *de facto* religions or only creedal schemes onto which the need for religion was displaced? Greeley hesitates here and leaves us to wonder if, in the end, he escapes by simply equating religion with value or world-view.

In addition to this imprecision there is the related problem of Greeley's habit of speaking about religion in general rather than about particular religions. I do not believe that he intends to grant independent reality to the abstract universal, Religion, but rather to discuss developments that are occurring in parallel yet particular ways within the various religions of America. The distinction, however, is often unclear. Greeley, for instance, does not deal specifically with Jewish life, yet one senses that he means his remarks to extend also to Jews, and as a way of giving meaning to Greeley's general statements, it would seem proper to ask how a Jew might respond to their claims.

TO COMMENT on Greeley's skepticism about the extent of secularization, a Jew need only, I believe, look back one or two generations in his own family. Even if he tries not to sentimentalize the past, he cannot help feeling that something has profoundly changed. That something is not only the curious amalgam of ethnicity and belief which commonly serves social scientists as the analytic model for the study of the Jews; it has to do more accurately with a matrix of historical symbols, ethical relations, and ritual gestures—as well as belief and kinship ties—which simply is no longer. Some Jews do manage to live within this totality, and many are in touch with elements of it, but for the majority secular-

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ization has been a reality: increasingly more areas of experience have ceased to be mediated through religious or traditional categories. To the Jew who inhabits a historical consciousness and feels at least ambivalent about this change, Greeley offers little comfort when he assures us that while historical forms come and go, something called religious needs endure.

Whatever comfort the fact of that endurance does yield lies in its capacity to enlarge our understanding of the "religious" nature of the Jewish community, especially the so-called "secularist" Jews who stand outside the formal framework of the religious tradition but continue to think of themselves as committed Jews. Presumably, according to Greeley, these people too have religious needs, experience religious moments, and live within coherent systems of meaning, non-theistic though they may be. They may stand outside for a variety of reasons: because a secular ideology like Zionism has seen itself historically antagonistic to religion, because the symbolic language of the tradition seems impenetrable and esoteric, or because the tradition does not appear closely to touch upon or support areas of experience in which their religious feelings most often arise. Their situation is an example of the variance between the historical symbols of Judaism and the perennial religious needs of Jews and it seriously puts in question the customary use of the labels "religious" and "secular" in describing the identity and behavior of Jews. What remains possible—and this is a promising direction—is the future thawing of the polarity and the development of a fuller integration of historical symbols with felt experience.

The need for such an integration is especially pressing now, because, Greeley claims, man is changing in ways which make commitment to a unitary system like Judaism increasingly difficult. Man's new freedom to choose how to satisfy his religious needs is one of the few changes Greeley does, in fact, acknowledge. In the place of the fiery convert of the 19th century who stood firmly within his adopted ideology, there has emerged a more cautious type: man, in Thomas Luckmann's phrase, as a "consumer of interpretive schemes." Avoiding the limitations imposed by total systems, post-ideological man pieces together from the marketplace of traditions and values his own, self-fabricated framework. These frameworks combine to form churchless "invisible religions" such as the civil-rights movement of the 60's and the "counter-culture" of recent years. In these formations, it is important to note, one finds no special allegiance to the celebrants' birthright religions: these phenomena are heterodoxies composed of whatever materials are at hand. Greeley presents this closing picture, in which I believe there is a great deal of truth, with feelings that are obviously divided. As a sociologist he is gratified by evidence of the enduring need to form "meaning systems," but as a Catholic priest he is disturbed by the implications for the future of the Church. Jews who are similarly concerned with the integrity of Judaism also might have mixed feelings on this score. While they might welcome and wish to participate in new movements and social phenomena, they might also be displeased at the prospect of Judaism's being reduced to one element in a more overarching system. Once absorbed into one or another invisible religion, Judaism would become merely an antiquarian resource in the world-construction of future generations of Jews. Some will wish to expedite this development, others to arrest it, but, in any case, the possibility of its happening should be pondered carefully indeed.

Arms Limitation

COLD DAWN: THE STORY OF SALT. By JOHN NEWHOUSE. *Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 302 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by JEFFREY MARSH

IN THE ten years since the Cuban missile crisis, the prospect of nuclear war has become more and more remote from the public mind. During this period the United States and the Soviet Union have gone to great lengths to avoid direct confrontation in potential crises, and a number of agreements have been made to keep nuclear weapons under control, such as the partial test-ban treaty of 1963 and the non-proliferation treaty of 1968. These steps, however, reassuring though they may appear, have not really slowed down the arms race, and as widespread public concern with nuclear war has lessened (except as a ritual incantation used to excuse the more egregious misbehavior of the young who have grown up in its shadow), the actual level of nuclear armaments possessed by each of the superpowers has continuously increased in sophistication and destructive capacity. The signing of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) agreements in Moscow in May 1972 has therefore generally been hailed as the dawn of a new era, when measures will be taken to slow down the arms race and even, eventually, to reverse it.

Yet when we examine the content and impact of these agreements, we find that the Interim Agreement on Offensive Arms allows each side as much technological improvement in the performance of its weapons as it can achieve without actually increasing the number or size of its launching vehicles, while the ABM Treaty formally binds each party to refrain from building any system capable of defending its population against the other's missiles (or for that matter, against missiles from any third party). If this is the dawn of a new era, then it is surely a cold dawn, as John Newhouse has aptly termed it in his account of the ideas and forces which shaped the Moscow agreements.

In order to show us how these particular agreements came to be signed, Mr. Newhouse discusses not only the subject matter of the negotiations, but also the details of the negotiating process. In SALT, the subject matter was exceptionally complex, and the fact that defense looms as such a large factor in the conduct of national affairs meant that there was a

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large number of interested parties. Obviously, different services within the military tend to favor different weapon systems, and so have different outlooks. In the U.S., these conflicts are generally resolved within the Joint Chiefs of Staff so that a united front can be presented to the civilian bureaucracy of the Department of Defense, where a number of different agencies have their own ideas about national-security policy. The State Department has to consider the international political ramifications, and to bear in mind not just the balance of power between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, but also how the details of the negotiations (and even the mere fact of the negotiations' taking place) could affect the perspectives of America's allies, whose military security is guaranteed ultimately by U.S. nuclear power. The Arms Control and Disarmament Agency has an institutional interest in promoting negotiations and agreements. And in attempting to analyze the reliability and potential military impact of an agreement, a number of different intelligence agencies have their own methods of estimation.

Mr. Newhouse is at his best in explaining how policy emerges from this labyrinth. He provides considerable detail on the origins of the first abortive SALT proposal in the closing days of the Johnson administration. We are given a fascinating account of the virtuoso performance with which Morton Halperin, then the thirty-year-old Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Policy Planning and Arms Control (and later a colleague of Mr. Newhouse at the Brookings Institution) orchestrated within a time-span of six weeks the emergence of a SALT proposal agreed upon by the various parts of the policy-formulating bureaucracy.

This proposal was not adopted by the incoming Nixon administration, which placed SALT as one of the first items on the agenda of Henry Kissinger, whose newly centralized policy-defining apparatus had to weave all the strands contributed by the various agencies into a coherent fabric and to decide which positions combined the

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greatest security for the U.S. with the best chance of acceptance by the Soviet Union, while at the same time making sure that the groups within the various bureaucracies could not attempt to exert outside pressure via the Congress or the press.

While the generation of policy in Washington is subject to a degree of control, the reaction of the Soviet Union is not so easily predicted. SALT was first proposed in 1967; it took the Soviets a year to react favorably, but then the invasion of Czechoslovakia made it impossible to begin talking. The attempts of President Johnson to start negotiations as his term was ending were unsuccessful, since the incoming administration made it perfectly clear that it wanted to make its own policy, and so the talks did not get under way until 1969. Even then, it took considerable time before progress became evident. The bureaucratic process in Washington had succeeded in generating a large number of proposals, but insufficient care had been taken in deciding which were most desirable. As a result, when the Soviets eagerly accepted the first U.S. proposal on ABM limitation, instead of waiting for the fallback position the U.S. really wanted, the original proposal had to be hastily withdrawn. While this might have embarrassed lesser mortals, the dauntless Henry Kissinger merely quipped that the Soviets had chosen the wrong option and had therefore been sent back to choose another one. Eventually, the talks began to progress when private negotiations began between Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin and Henry Kissinger, on a higher level than the official SALT delegations. From then on, most substantial discussion took place on this "back channel," and the official "front channel" served more for ironing out technicalities.

Given both the drawn-out nature of the negotiations and their potential impact on the world power structure, Mr. Newhouse has ample opportunity throughout to refer to that staple of Kissinger buffs, the Congress of Vienna. I have mentioned the potential danger of inducing perceptions in Western Europe that its security was threatened; this meant that the U.S. was not willing to consider restrictions on the so-called forward-based systems, aircraft with a primarily non-nuclear technical role in Europe which nonetheless have a capability of delivering nuclear weapons to Soviet territory. This problem proved intractable, and still remains a potential stumbling block in future negotiations. The Soviet obsession with a threat from China proved surprisingly strong, and it seems that the Nixon initiative toward China, however unfortunate may have been its political impact in other directions, acted as a strong incentive for the Soviets to achieve agreement with the U.S.

THE underlying factor which determined the outcome of the talks, however, lies in the interaction between strategic doctrine and weapon systems, and here Mr. Newhouse's treatment is somewhat disappointing, especially in view of his familiarity with the issues involved and his skill in presenting them. The basic debate over what SALT should do was concerned with the relationship between offensive and defensive systems. By the mid-60's the U.S. thermonuclear arsenal was basically complete. Three complete systems, of bombers, land- and submarine-based missiles, each had the capability of delivering a crippling blow to the Soviet Union, even after an all-out Soviet attack on the U.S. Through the middle and late 60's the Soviets were building up their initially inferior posture to the point where the actual number of missiles they had was overtaking that of the U.S., but the U.S. at the same time was upgrading its own capability by installing multiple warheads (MIRV) on its missiles—so that the U.S. still retained a superiority in the number of deliverable warheads. A debate raged in the second half of the 60's on the desirability and feasibility of building an ABM system in the United States. Those upholding the prevailing strategic orthodoxy of assured destruction held that since the function of thermonuclear weapons was to deter war, any attempt to defend the U.S. population against nuclear attack (particularly if such an attempt involved MIRV'ing its missiles) would suggest it was considering war as a feasible policy, and therefore encourage the Soviet Union at the very least to increase its offensive forces in order to retain the capacity to retaliate; at worst, the Soviet Union might even be tempted to a preemptive attack. Thus it was that when even the small ABM system proposed by the Nixon administration met heavy public and congressional opposition, limitation of ABM became the prime area in which it was believed agreement might be reached with the Soviet Union.

The Russians showed eagerness after 1968 for such an agreement, even though they had earlier displayed strong bias in favor of defensive systems, in keeping with traditional Russian strategic doctrine.

While defensive systems are strictly regulated in the final accords, offensive systems are allowed to grow even more advanced and destructive, so long as the number of launchers is not increased. This is meant to make the consequences of a nuclear war so awful that deterrence cannot break down. What it does, in fact, is to guarantee that if deterrence does break down, the consequences will be as awful as possible. This is the basic reason why some people believe that the Moscow agreements are sadly misconceived, and why they would prefer arms-control agreements which closely restrict offensive systems while permitting as much defense as possible.

When Mr. Newhouse discusses this strategic debate, he takes an attitude of detached amusement, likening the debaters to medieval scholastics. He quotes some of the dogmas of assured destruction: "Killing people is good, killing weapons is bad" and "stability demands that each . . . stand wholly exposed to the destructive power of the other." When one realizes that this is the approved philosophy of SALT, it tends to lose some of its flavor.

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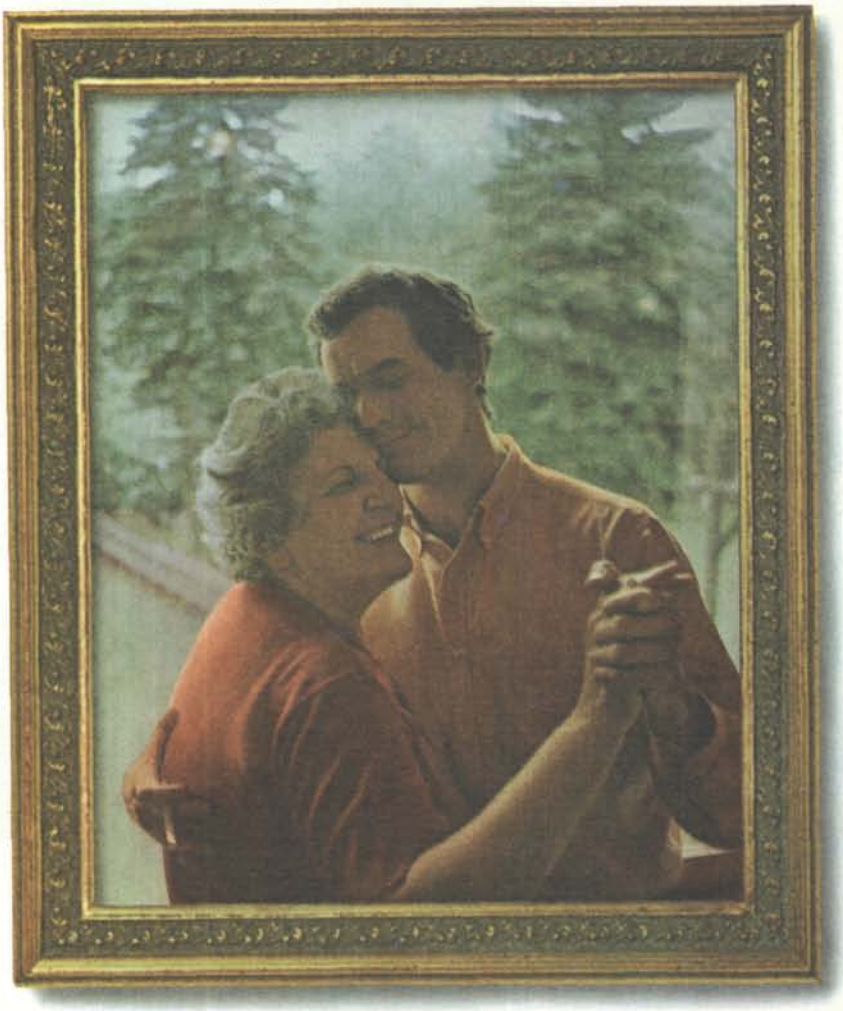
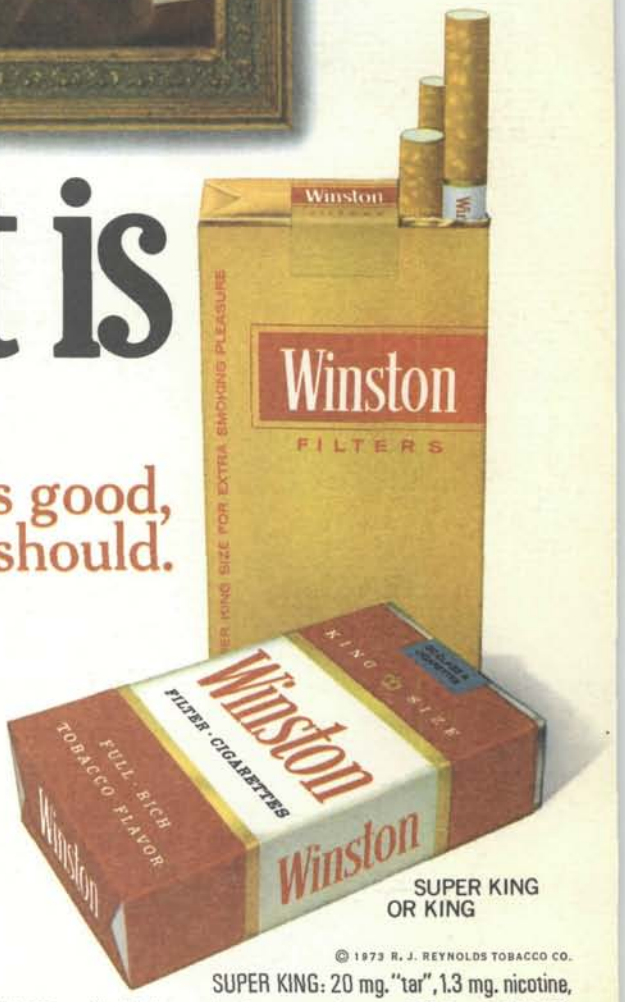


How good it is

Winston tastes good,
when a cigarette should.



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